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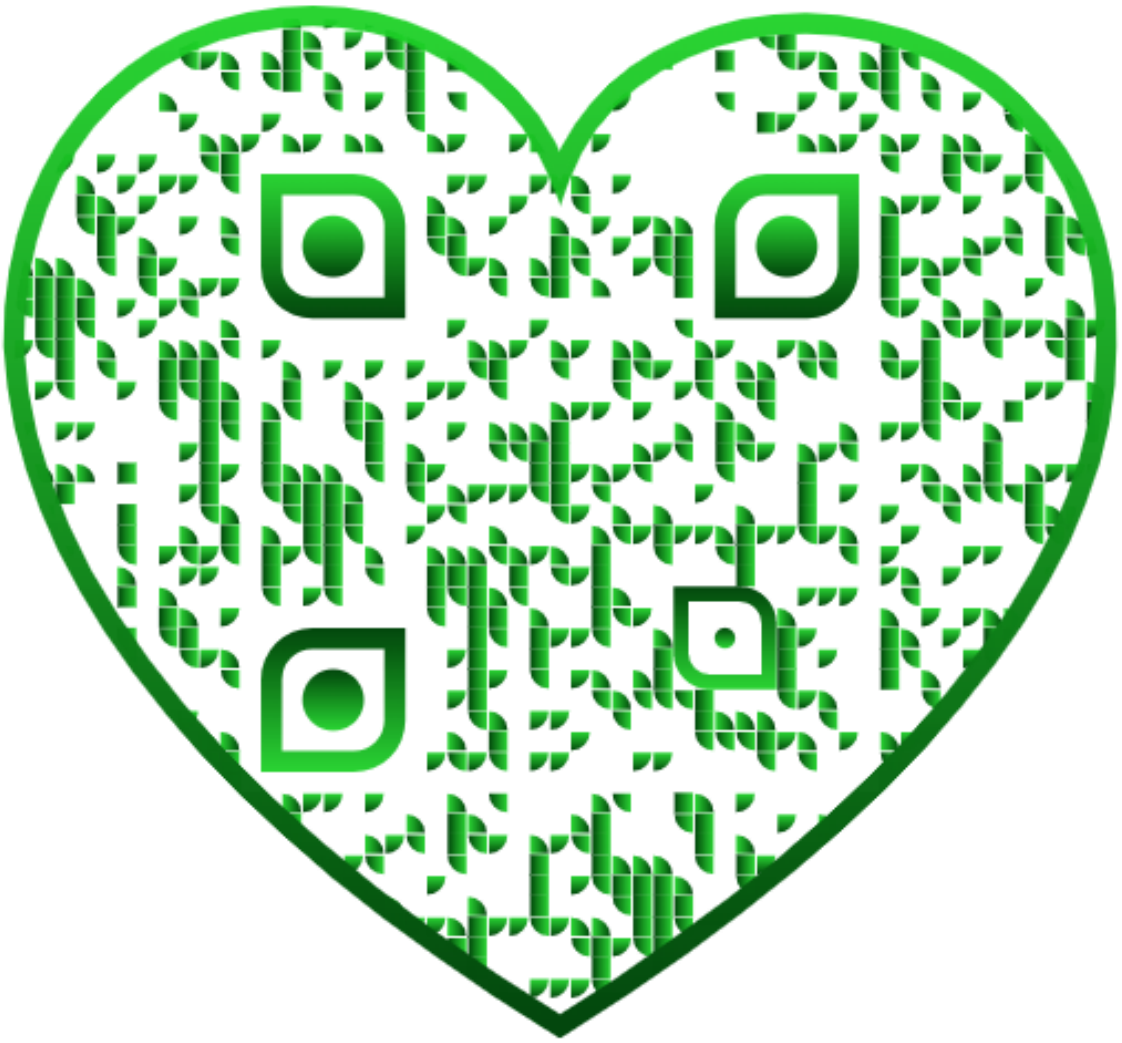

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Will was chuffed with his Secret Santa present: Becky from Milk Teeth

NEWS ON THE COVER:

Santa pays an uncharacteristically rowdy visit to a rock show **(p4)**, before **M. Shadows** takes us inside **Avenged Sevenfold**'s two new releases, as well as reflecting on a super-busy year for the band **(p6)**. Plus: the **Kerrang! Readers' Poll** results are in **(p16)**!

FEATURES

ON THE COVER: In case you hadn't already guessed, the mighty **Marilyn Manson** heads up our Christmas extravaganza. The God of Fuck invites us into bed (literally) to chat about everything from latest album Heaven Upside Down to spending Noël alone **(p22)**. Elsewhere in the mag, we find out how your favourite rockstars' years have been, as **Patrick Stump**, **Simon Neil**, **Winston McCall**, **Alex Gaskarth**, **Reba Meyers** and more look back on a whirlwind 2017 **(p30)**. If that's not enough for your greedy eyes, we sit down with the best bands in British music for our annual **Kerrang! Christmas Dinner**. Get ready for all hell to break loose **(p52)**... And, finally, there's a **Bloody Massive 2017 Quiz** to keep you busy over the holidays. We *bet* you can't get full marks **(p60)**.

POSTERS

Why hello there, part two of K!'s **Shots Of 2017** special. Looking mighty handsome there, aren't you? We've also got your last-minute presents covered (well, minus the tape and stick-on labels) with some **Foo Fighters** and **Green Day** wrapping paper **(p36)**.

LIVES

The Kerrang! Tour 2017 might be over for another year, but that doesn't mean you can't re-live **The Amity Affliction**, **Boston Manor**, **Vukovi** and **Casey**'s killer sets from Manchester **(p64)**. And, because we weren't already busy enough cramming the mag full of all the best stuff, we headed to Japan to celebrate a coming-of-age ceremony for **SU-METAL** of **BABYMETAL (p66)**. Best. Birthday. Ever.

GIGS

It's usually a quiet time for gigs... but not with **Five Finger Death Punch** in town! Zoltan Bathory prepares for their return **(p72)**.

COVER PHOTO: PEROU **DIGITAL ART:** STEVE HORSFALL

MERRY CHRISTMAS

IT'S THE most wonderful time of the year – finally, having endured festive music in shops for the past two months and the relentless march to buy presents, Christmas is here! To celebrate, we've worked harder than Santa's sweatshop elves [*with far nicer working conditions, for the record – K! HR Ed*] to bring you our annual bumper Xmas edition of Kerrang!, filled with everything you'll need to get you through the season, and then some. No reindeer or Santas were harmed in the making by Manson, by the way.

2017's been a rollercoaster of a year, with many highs and lows – and a few changes, too – and from everyone here at K!, thank you for sharing it all with us. Your passion for music has made the past 12 months thrilling and hugely rewarding.

We're all off to watch The Muppet Christmas Carol and stuff ourselves silly with mince pies, but we'll see you all on the other side. We can't wait to show you what we've got in store for 2018. Have an amazing Christmas, everyone!

TEAM KERRANG!, DECEMBER 2017

OPEN THIS PRESENT UP!

WHY WERE Camden Council traffic wardens attempting to stick a Fixed Penalty Notice to a load of be-antlered animals on London's Highgate Road last week? Because there was a guest of honour at the final date of the Kerrang! Tour at London's O2 Forum Kentish Town, when none other than Father Christmas himself turned up. We made the guest list and checked it twice, so we know it was him. Here's old Saint Nick working off a year's worth of sitting on the sofa in the circle-pit for The Amity Affliction, in preparation for delivering lumps of coal to ungrateful children all over the world. We just hope he sleeps off all the sherry-bombs he was downing before December 24.

PHOTO: ANDY FORD

BIG PICTURE

Aww, M. Shadows had been really looking forward to that ice cream…

"2017 REALLY TESTED US... BUT 2018 IS GOING TO BE AMAZING"

YOU THINK YOU HAD A MAD YEAR? TRY BEING **AVENGED SEVENFOLD**. THE CALIFORNIAN HEROES HARDLY SAT DOWN IN 2017. AND, AS **M. SHADOWS** REVEALS, 2018 WON'T BE RELAXING, EITHER...

HAVING ENDED 2016 by stealth-bombing the most epically ambitious album of their career, The Stage, Avenged Sevenfold have spent the past 12 months following it up in equally impressive fashion. They kicked off the New Year by rolling out The Stage World Tour right here in the UK, followed by a U.S. tour with Metallica. Somehow, they found time to expand the content of the record with a load of bonus tracks and covers, turning it into what they described as a 'living piece of art'. This expansion culminated in The Stage: Deluxe Edition, which is due to arrive three days before Christmas. And then there's the acoustic Live At The GRAMMY Museum album they released on December 8.

2018 looks like being just as busy. The band have been nominated for their first-ever GRAMMY, and the world tour continues apace. Then there's the small matter of headlining Download for the second time, alongside legends Ozzy Osbourne and Guns N' Roses.

Before he could sit down for his Christmas dinner, frontman M. Shadows looked back on his massive 12 months, and forward to the next…

HOW ARE YOU WINDING DOWN FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR?

M. SHADOWS (*VOCALS*): "I'm spending a lot of time playing golf, hanging out with my family, and fishing with the kids. My three-year-old has been catching more fish than all of us combined – it's crazy! I've been winding down, and then we're going snowboarding in Utah for Christmas."

HOW DO YOU FEEL THE PAST 12 MONTHS WENT FOR THE BAND?

"I feel like it really tested us. The Stage came out at the end of 2016, but then we had a lot of decisions to make regarding how we toured it. And then the Metallica tour came around in the summer as well. There were so many trials, but I think it turned out really, really cool for us. We were able to reinvent our live show, and we were able to support one of the biggest bands on the planet. It all worked out, but it was pretty crazy at the beginning."

"IT WAS WEIRD BEING A SUPPORT BAND AGAIN..."

M. SHADOWS

DID IT FEEL STRANGE GOING BACK TO BEING A SUPPORT BAND AGAIN?

"I'll say it felt extremely weird! It felt weird not being in charge of our show, it felt strange playing in the daylight. There were a lot of strange mental hurdles that we had to get over doing that tour, but at the end of the day I think it's a good thing for us to expand ourselves and be open to doing things like that. Especially when it's Metallica that calls!"

DO YOU THINK THE STAGE IS THE BIGGEST AND BEST PRODUCTION YOU'VE DONE?

"I feel like they're all different. I was looking at Nightmare's [2010] production recently, I was looking at Hail To The King [2013], and they're pretty cool for the different vibes we were going for. With Hail To The King, it was more of a fire-and-flames, in-your-face rock'n'roll show, while The Stage was maybe more like something Tool or Rush would do. It's a little more progressive-leaning in terms of how the music and the visuals play out."

YOU HAD NEW TRACKS COMING OUT THROUGH THE YEAR FOR THE 'EVOLVING' VERSION OF THE STAGE. HOW DO YOU THINK THAT WORKED?

"I think it was pretty cool, but I wish that the rock

WORDS: PAUL TRABERS **PHOTOS:** ANDY FORD, GETTY

fans would get on the streaming services a little more quickly. That's obviously the future. We won't be seeing CDs for much longer, and it's disheartening to me to see hip-hop and dance music and every other genre doing all these huge things on streaming services, where rock suffers. I wish people had streamed the evolving record more, but at the end of the day, if people want a physical product, we're giving them what they want with the deluxe version."

Sadly, there weren't enough acoustic guitars to go round

AS WELL AS THAT, DOWNLOAD'S ANOTHER BIG DATE FOR THE 2018 CALENDAR...

"It's the biggest one! It's the festival we always wanted to play growing up, and to be able to headline it a couple of years ago was a career highlight. If I look at the whole calendar for 2018, that's one huge date that stands out for me personally, and for the rest of the band as well."

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRST ACOUSTIC ALBUM, LIVE AT THE GRAMMY MUSEUM, WHICH YOU SURPRISE-RELEASED A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO...

"We get asked all the time to do these things that we always scoffed at when we were younger. We got asked again when we had some time off after the Metallica tour, and we just thought it would be cool. We had a month to work on the arrangements and work out which songs we wanted to do and how to jump from an electric to an acoustic setting. We also thought, 'Hey, we've never been nominated for a GRAMMY, maybe if we help the cause here we can nab a nomination!' I'm also glad we've released it, because now the fans who didn't get to sit in that 250-person room can also get to hear it."

SOME OF THE PROCEEDS FROM THE RELEASE ARE GOING TO THE GRAMMY MUSEUM. WHAT EXACTLY WILL THEY BE FUNDING?

"The GRAMMY Museum has the MusiCares initiative, and they help artists in any sort of need or troubles they might have. That might be drug addiction, or if your van gets stolen on tour, or if you're in a car accident. I remember a band on Warped Tour got their van and all their merch stolen, and MusiCares helped them recoup. They're always there to help struggling artists, and when [late Avenged drummer] The Rev had some problems with substance abuse, MusiCares helped us pay for his rehab. It's time for us to give back to them."

YOU DID INDEED NAB A NOMINATION FOR THE GRAMMYS, AGAINST THE LIKES OF METALLICA AND FOO FIGHTERS. ARE YOU EXCITED?

"I'm excited to lose on national television! The GRAMMYs like Foo Fighters and Metallica, let's put it that way. We'll see if we can snag a win, but the reality is we're just happy to be part of the conversation. We're also happy to go with our wives to the GRAMMYs. We get invited every year, but we always said we weren't going to go unless we were nominated. It will finally be fun to attend with a reason to actually be there."

YOU'RE A HUGE GUNS N' ROSES FAN. HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE HEADLINING ALONGSIDE AXL AND CO.?

"It's going to be amazing. I just saw them at the Forum [in Los Angeles] when they played a four-hour set, and it was awesome. A lot of people thought it was too long, but I'm a super-fan and I loved every minute. I'm excited to share the stage, and I love just looking at the ads and seeing our name up there with Ozzy and Guns N' Roses. It definitely makes me proud."

CAN WE EXPECT ANY CHANGES FROM THE SHOWS WE SAW OVER HERE IN JANUARY?

"Oh yeah, we're not going to do the exact same thing. We're working with a couple of things, moving the screens into different positions and trying some different stuff. And obviously, the giant moving cube we had can't fly over people's heads outside! We're working on some ideas, and I actually got some mock-ups through yesterday. We're working on all that right now."

IS THE FOCUS FOR 2018 STILL CONTINUING TO HIT THE BOARDS WORLDWIDE?

"Yeah, we're going to be on the road literally 'til the end of next year!"

"HEADLINING DOWNLOAD WITH GUNS N' ROSES WILL BE AMAZING"

M. SHADOWS

I want YOU to have a great Christmas

The Stage: Deluxe Edition *is out on December 22. Avenged headline* ***Download*** *in June – see the Gig Guide*

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SOMEBODY'S LISTENING

A NEW HELPLINE, RUN BY THE **HELP MUSICIANS UK** CHARITY, WILL AID MUSICIANS IN IDENTIFYING AND TACKLING THEIR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

A NEW free 24/7 mental health service will offer support to those working in the music industry. The helpline has been set up by Help Musicians UK, the country's leading independent music charity, as part of their Music Minds Matter campaign, which launched after Chester Bennington took has own life in July.

In the months following the Linkin Park frontman's death, the charity experienced a 22 per cent increase in requests for help from musicians. Their report, Can Music Make You Sick?, revealed musicians are three times more likely to experience depression compared to the general public, resulting in their pledge to create this support line, which also offers individually-tailored assistance to managers, those working for record labels, and tour crew. As well as listening and emotional support, it will provide advice on getting a diagnosis, directions to additional services, and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

This is incredibly important news. Research tells us that one in four of us will suffer from mental health problems at some stage in our lives, and therefore no industry is immune. The music industry, however, is subject to its own unique pressures, and therefore specialist support is essential. Musicians and tour crew, for example, can experience a sense of isolation and dislocation when on tour for long periods of time, with exposure to drink and drugs likely to exasperate existing issues.

The Music Minds Matter logo

There's certainly no shortage of bands discussing their mental health problems, on record and in interviews. This year, albums by K! coverstars Nothing But Thieves (Broken Machine) and Enter Shikari (The Spark) articulated these issues to the bands' respective audiences. Joel Birch, vocalist for this year's K! Tour headliners The Amity Affliction, discussed his long-time struggle with K! earlier this year, as part of our partnership with the charity YoungMinds. "In the '90s, when I was a teenager, mental health wasn't a prevalent topic in society," he revealed. "As the years have gone on, mental illness has become more prominent in the public eye, and it's allowing us to tackle the problem head-on."

"WE CAN TACKLE THE PROBLEM HEAD-ON..."
JOEL BIRCH, THE AMITY AFFLICTION

Continued discussion and expression within the music industry will help erode any residual discomfort around discussing mental health, and make those suffering feel comfortable enough to speak out sooner. And when they're ready to talk, they now know just who to call.

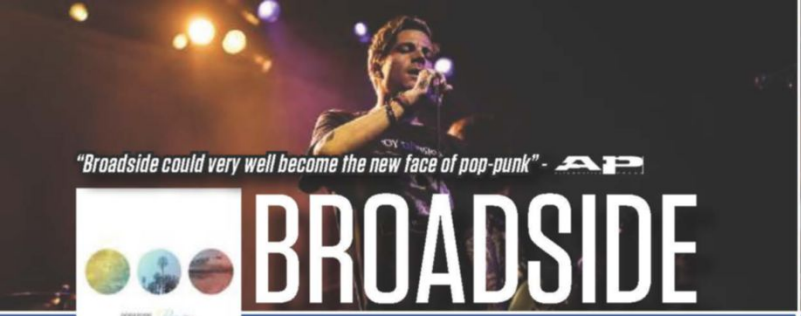
IT'S GOOD TO TALK

If you're a musician, or work in the music industry, and need to speak to someone, you can call **0808 802 8008** free of charge, 24-hours a day, seven days a week – including over this Christmas period. For more information on Music Minds Matter, please visit **Musicmindsmatter.org.uk**.

Joel Birch has always been vocal about his mental health struggles

The months following Chester Bennington's death saw more musicians reaching out for help

WORDS: JAMES HICKIE **PHOTO:** GETTY



"Broadside could very well become the new face of pop-punk" - AP

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"'Charm City' is a solid example of pop-punk done right" - OUTBURN

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DEAD GIRLS ACADEMY

I'LL FIND A WAY (SINGLE) - AVAILABLE NOW

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PANDORA'S
CHRISTMAS CAROL
BY RAY ZELL
PANDORA! WEB! GOING CAROLLING? CAN I COME? CAN I? CAN I?
MANSON!? WHY? SO YOU CAN MAKE A MOCKERY OF THE FESTIVE SEASON!
MAYBE I WANNA TASTE SOME NORMAL.
I'M NOT STUPID, YOU'LL SING STUFF LIKE...
...WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE AND SING A SLAYER SONG TONITE!
WHAT!? HOW DOES YER MIND WORK!? YOU HAVE ISSUES.
HMM. COS IT'S CHRISTMAS, I'LL OPEN MY HEART. BUT, I'LL BE WATCHIN' YOU!
INTENSE, ISN'T SHE.
OH...
...PANDORA TAKES THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY VERY SERIOUSLY.
FA-LA-LA-LA-LA
HEY! YER BOOK'S UPSIDE-DOWN!
OOPS. SORRY. ONLY ONE LENS.
CAROLS
AND ON THEY GO...
...DOOR...
...TO DOOR...
...TO DOOR...
WAY-OH HO HO!
LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA
I'LL DRINK TO THAT.
TRULY HAIR-RAISIN'
WAIT!...
...THIS SHIT'S FUCKED UP!
THE MERRIMENT? THE REJOICING?
NO... THE FACT THAT EVERY DOOR WE KNOCK ON HAS A ROCKSTAR BEHIND IT!
I'M GETTIN' THIS ONE!
STOP! DON'T TOUCH THAT!!
WHAT THE HELL...!? I'VE BROUGHT THE HOUSE DOWN BEFORE NOW, BUT NOT THE WHOLE STREET!
MMF IT'S A FAKE STREET, OKAY!
A PROP!?...
...THESE THINGS CAN BE DANGEROUS, Y'KNOW, IF THEY'RE NOT PROPERLY SECURED!!!
HO! NO! NO! I SAW WHAT HAPPENED...
...GET THEE BEHIND ME, BRIAN, I'LL SORT THIS OUT!
SANTA!
TAKING POOR BRIAN CAROLLING UP AN UNSAFE FAKE STREET!? WELL, YOUNG LADY, THAT'S YOU ON THE EVIL LIST!
'EVIL LIST'!? ME!? BUT, I LOVE CHRISTMAS! IT'S MANSON...
...HE'S THE EVIL ONE!
TSK. SHAMELESS.
BEHIND THEE, SANTA, BEHIND THEE!!!

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KERRANG! ROCK CHART

IT'S CHRISTMAS, IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW. SOUNDTRACK THE SEASON WITH THESE FESTIVE BANGERS

	WEEKS ON CHART	HIGHEST POSITION	ARTIST	TITLE
1	1	1	THE DARKNESS	CHRISTMAS TIME (DON'T LET THE BELLS END)
2	1	2	BLINK-182	I WON'T BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS
3	1	3	MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE	ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU
4	1	4	FALL OUT BOY	YULE SHOOT YOUR EYE OUT
5	1	5	RISE AGAINST	MAKING CHRISTMAS
6	1	6	AC/DC	MISTRESS FOR CHRISTMAS
7	1	7	COREY TAYLOR	X-M@$
8	2	8	CREEPER	FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK
9	1	9	JIMMY EAT WORLD	LAST CHRISTMAS
10	1	10	WEEZER	WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
11	1	11	NOFX	XMAS HAS BEEN X'ED
12	1	12	SIMPLE PLAN	CHRISTMAS EVERY DAY
13	1	13	KORN	KIDNAP THE SANDY CLAWS
14	1	14	TAKING BACK SUNDAY	12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS
15	1	15	PANIC! AT THE DISCO	WHITE CHRISTMAS
16	1	16	KING DIAMOND	NO PRESENTS FOR CHRISTMAS
17	1	17	SMASHING PUMPKINS	CHRISTMASTIME
18	1	18	HENRY ROLLINS	'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS
19	1	19	TYPE O NEGATIVE	RED WATER (CHRISTMAS MOURNING)
20	1	20	TWISTED SISTER	I SAW MOMMY KISSING SANTA CLAUS

STAFF PICK!

YULE SHOOT YOUR EYE OUT
FALL OUT BOY

JENNYFER J. WALKER, CONTRIBUTING ED

"As if Fall Out Boy managed to write a Christmas song that sounds like a Take This To Your Grave track. Anyway, this is great. Can we get Patrick Stump re-recording all the other Christmas songs now, plz, guys? Guys…?"

DID YOU KNOW?

MISTRESS FOR CHRISTMAS
AC/DC

Taking a swipe at the business world, AC/DC wrote Mistress For Christmas to mock a certain Donald Trump. He'd appeared on the cover of an issue of Playboy in 1990, so Angus and Malcolm Young poked some fun at him and his behaviours. Imagine writing that song today…

INSIDE THE SONG…

HANNAH GREENWOOD, CREEPER

HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT MAKING YOUR COVER OF THE POGUES' CLASSIC?

"When it came to arranging the piano parts for Fairytale… I wanted to keep it fairly similar to the original, but we added in layers of acoustic and electric guitars to make sure it wasn't too soft. Will [Gould, vocals] and I had a great time doing the vocals, even though I definitely sound like I'm auditioning for Nancy from [musical] Oliver! *(laughs)*."

DID YOU KNOW?

KIDNAP THE SANDY CLAWS
KORN

This track was recorded for the Nightmare Revisited album. The 2008 LP was comprised of reworked songs of the soundtrack from Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas. So there.

STAFF PICK!

I WON'T BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS
BLINK-182

JAMES HINGLE, LISTINGS ED

"Fun, silly and probably one of the most anti-festive tunes out there. If you want to be left alone this Christmas, then this is the perfect song to soundtrack that."

STAFF PICK!

X-M@$
COREY TAYLOR

EMILY CARTER, PRODUCTION ED

"'*If I ain't drunk then it ain't Christmas*,' Corey croons here. Never have I related to a song more in my life."

STAFF PICK!

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU
MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE

JAKE RICHARDSON, WRITER

"All I really want for Christmas is for MCR to get back together, but in the meantime, I'll settle for spinning this barbed take on Mariah Carey's classic. The cover begins with Gerard Way's serene vocals backed by just a piano, before exploding into MCR's trademark theatrical emo-punk sound. Gerard's personality radiates throughout – particularly when he chillingly whispers, '*I just wanna see my baby standing right outside my door*' – and this song as a whole is further proof the New Jersey natives could turn their hand to pretty much anything."

INSIDE THE SONG…

JUSTIN HAWKINS, THE DARKNESS

WHAT DID YOU WRITE CHRISTMAS TIME (DON'T LET THE BELLS END) ABOUT?

"I thought about what it's like to be emotionally and geographically detached from somebody who has thrown themselves into their work for 51 weeks of the year. And what it's like to have only a few family days, and how the idea of filling those days with meaningful, quality-time activities keeps you going whilst absent."

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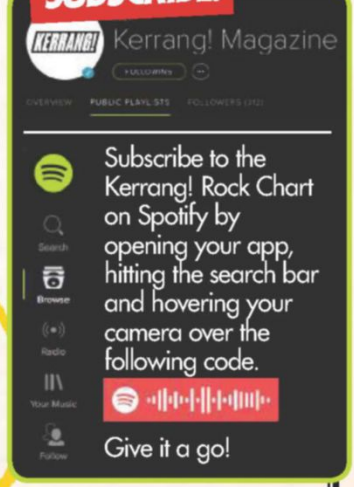

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THE KERRANG! READERS' POLL 2017

THE RESULTS

YOU VOTED IN YOUR THOUSANDS. NOW IT'S TIME TO UNVEIL THE THINGS THAT ROCKED *YOUR* 2017 – FOR GOOD AND FOR BAD...

LIVE BAND OF THE YEAR

1. GREEN DAY
2. FOO FIGHTERS
3. METALLICA
4. BABYMETAL
5. AVENGED SEVENFOLD

BAND OF THE YEAR

1. GREEN DAY
2. LINKIN PARK
3. PARAMORE
4. PVRIS
5. ENTER SHIKARI

■ Billie Joe, Mike and Tré have only gone and done the double this year, though we can't say we're entirely surprised. Firstly, even after an incredible *31 years* as a band, Green Day remain a live act at the absolute top of their game, as anyone that caught the world-beating performances on their February UK tour, or epic appearance at British Summer Time in London's Hyde Park, can attest. Oh, and secondly, according to the subtitle of the punk rock trio's latest recently-released hits package, they also happen to be *God's Favorite Band*. Who are we to argue in the face of such overwhelming evidence? Well done, gents!

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR

1. DOWNLOAD
2. WARPED TOUR
3. SLAM DUNK
4. 2000TREES
5. READING & LEEDS

■ Summer wouldn't be summer without a trip to Donington Park, would it? You obviously agree, given that Download is the headliner in this category.

"I just want to say a big thank you to the Kerrang! readers for voting Download the Festival Of The Year. K! readers have always been a big part of the festival – we love you. See you next year!"
ANDY COPPING, DOWNLOAD

PHOTO: TOM BARNES

SONG OF THE YEAR

1. ARCHITECTS – DOOMSDAY
2. LINKIN PARK – ONE MORE LIGHT
3. DON BROCO – PRETTY
4. NECK DEEP – IN BLOOM
5. ENTER SHIKARI – THE SIGHTS

■ As an illustration of the enduring power of music, Architects' first new song following Tom Searle's death – started by the late guitarist, and finished by his bandmates – is about as potent as it gets. It's both titanic and transcendental.

"Thank you so much for voting for us. We all worked incredibly hard on Doomsday and we are so proud of what we created. The song is dedicated to Tom, who we couldn't have written the song without. He will continue to inspire us for as long as Architects exists."
ARCHITECTS

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

1. FOO FIGHTERS – RUN
2. LINKIN PARK – ONE MORE LIGHT
3. DON BROCO – PRETTY
4. NECK DEEP – IN BLOOM
5. ENTER SHIKARI – THE SIGHTS

■ Dave Grohl is 48 years old, and if the video for Concrete And Gold's lead single is any indication, his rowdiest days are ahead of him and his Foo Fighters bandmates. Much like the song, the promo starts sedately, before descending into some silver-haired savagery. It makes retirement look rocking.

NEW BAND OF THE YEAR

1. PALAYE ROYALE
2. CHASE ATLANTIC
3. COUNTERFEIT
4. SLEEP ON IT
5. DREAM STATE

■ They say that what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas, but Palaye Royale are proving the exception. Making as big and colourful a spectacle as the city of their birth, big things beckon.

"We want to thank the readers of Kerrang!, and our loyal fans, the Soldiers of the Royal Council, for choosing us as their favourite new band of the year. We are extremely honoured to have you all as fans."
PALAYE ROYALE

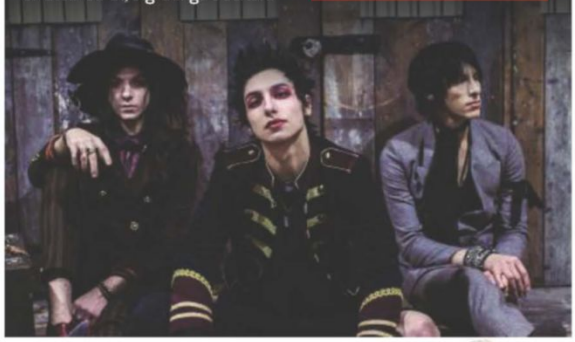


PHOTO: TOM BARNES

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. ENTER SHIKARI – THE SPARK
2. NECK DEEP – THE PEACE AND THE PANIC
3. ALL TIME LOW – LAST YOUNG RENEGADE
4. MASTODON – EMPEROR OF SAND
5. PARAMORE – AFTER LAUGHTER

■ An album symbolising uncertain times, be it personal anguish or public dissatisfaction, The Spark is a worthy winner. Few records can make your eyes weep and your feet move, yet Shikari's latest did just that.

"We want to thank each and every person that voted for The Spark as Album Of The Year. The record means so much to us, so it's wonderful to know that it is beginning to mean a lot to other people too. Thanks for a great 2017, everyone!"
ENTER SHIKARI

SOLO ARTIST OF THE YEAR

1. FRANK IERO
2. ANDY BLACK
3. LIL PEEP
4. JAMIE LENMAN
5. MACHINE GUN KELLY

■ After 2016's bus crash, you'd have forgiven Frank for having a quiet 2017. Instead, punk rock's premier workaholic came back with a vengeance.

"I am honoured. I would be lying if I didn't say I was also hopeful to have been voted Most Likely To Win In A Fight Against A Bengal Tiger Using Nothing But Their Bare Hands, but I hear that isn't actually a category yet, so I'll just take this one with a humble smile."
FRANK IERO

BEST THING ABOUT 2017

1. BRENDON URIE IN KINKY BOOTS

2. JEREMY CORBYN
3. PARAMORE'S COMEBACK
4. TWENTY ONE PILOTS ACCEPTING A GRAMMY IN THEIR PANTS
5. ONE LOVE MANCHESTER CONCERT

■ As debut Broadway gigs go, Panic! At The Disco frontman Brendon Urie's was suitably colourful. His role as Charlie Price required him to sing (no problem), wear loud outfits (check), and master a northern English accent (ermmmm). Nevertheless, the reviews were highly positive.

WORST THING ABOUT 2017

1. DONALD TRUMP

2. CHESTER BENNINGTON PASSING AWAY
3. MANCHESTER ATTACKS
4. CHRIS CORNELL PASSING AWAY
5. BREXIT SHAMBLES

■ This is a year in which we lost some much-loved musicians, and yet the continued U.S. presidency of a man Corey Taylor dubbed a "petty, petulant c**t" is still, by a mile, the absolute low point.

HERO OF THE YEAR

1. CHESTER BENNINGTON, LINKIN PARK

2. LYNN GUNN, PVRIS
3. ROU REYNOLDS, ENTER SHIKARI
4. BILLIE JOE ARMSTRONG, GREEN DAY
5. MIKE SHINODA, LINKIN PARK

■ For being a man with a voice envied by his peers. For being a musician who showed it was okay to say you're not okay. For being a figure that, even in death, still inspires. These are the reasons Chester is a hero.

"Thank you to Kerrang! readers for choosing Chester as your Hero Of The Year. It means a lot, and we are so grateful for all of you. As Chester always said, 'Linkin Park has the best fans in the world.'"
MIKE SHINODA

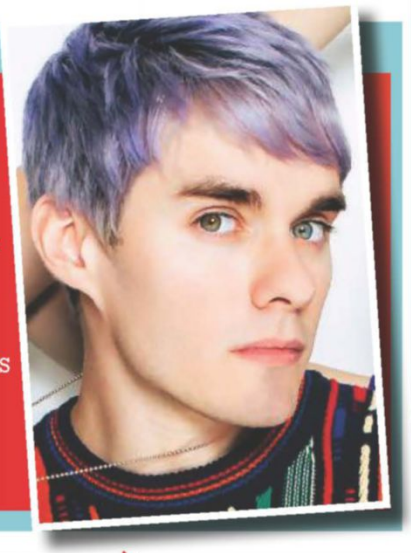
TWEETER OF THE YEAR

1. AWSTEN KNIGHT, WATERPARKS

2. FRANK IERO
3. MARK HOPPUS, BLINK-182
4. HAYLEY WILLIAMS, PARAMORE
5. ROU REYNOLDS, ENTER SHIKARI

■ Waterparks' leader packs a lot of character into limited characters. From earnestness to irreverence, there's a little something for everyone in Awsten's tweets. Oh, and his current Twitter name is BLONDE JOVI.

"AW LORD WE MADE IT. THANKS EVERYONE FOR READING THE STUPID SHIT I SAY AND FOR TAKING EVERYTHING I SAY WAY TOO SERIOUSLY, Y'ALL THE MVPS OF MY SALTY PINK HEART, LUV U."
AWSTEN KNIGHT



FILM OF THE YEAR

1. IT

2. DUNKIRK
3. THOR: RAGNAROK
4. AMERICAN SATAN
5. BABY DRIVER

■ Let's face it, there wasn't going to be a more metal film this year than one about a killer clown, was there? Or more lucrative, either: this year's reimagining of the Stephen King epic is the highest-grossing horror film *ever*.

TV SHOW OF THE YEAR

1. STRANGER THINGS 2

2. GAME OF THRONES
3. SUPERNATURAL
4. THE WALKING DEAD
5. TEEN WOLF

■ Expectations were almost impossibly high going into this, but the second visit to Hawkins, Indiana was thankfully just as brilliantly retro and binge-worthy as the first. Can we go back again, please?

KERRANG! COVER OF THE YEAR

1. CHESTER BENNINGTON

2. NECK DEEP
3. CODE ORANGE
4. CHRIS CORNELL
5. NOTHING BUT THIEVES

■ This commemorative issue of K! was a true labour of love, following Chester's shock passing on July 20. But, after trying to do justice to a man who touched so many lives, the question of the cover image remained. How to you encapsulate such an iconic figure in a single image? Thankfully, K! snapper Paul Harries had the answer in the form of this beautiful shot, which shows Chester for what he was: a rock giant, and yet a vulnerable human being.

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

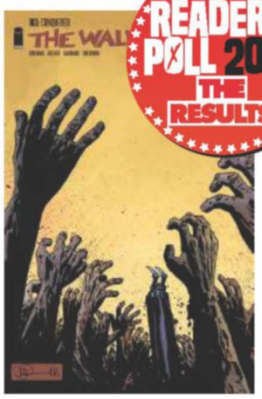
THE KERRANG! READERS' POLL 2017 THE RESULTS

BEST RADIO SHOW

1. THE RADIO 1 ROCK SHOW WITH DANIEL P. CARTER
2. ALEX BAKER, KERRANG! RADIO
3. THE ANDY SHOW
4. JOHNNY DOOM, KERRANG! RADIO
5. ANNIE MAC, BBC RADIO 1

■ Mr. Carter has long been the hirsute heralder of rock on the airwaves, so it's great to see him being recognised for it. Now tell us: what does that 'P' stand for?

"Thank you to the Kerrang! readers! It's been a pretty awesome year for rock and metal, which always makes for a rad show. Big-ups to The Radio 1 Rock Show team, Carly and Hayley, for making 2017 rule."
DANIEL P. CARTER



BEST COMIC

1. THE WALKING DEAD
2. DOOM PATROL
3. RIVERDALE
4. UMBRELLA ACADEMY
5. THE FLASH

■ They may lumber along slowly, but those zombies never fail to capture the imagination – or chew on brains – do they? While the TV series, as well as spin-off Fear The Walking Dead, continue to keep viewers hooked, the original source material is still proving a flesh-ripping page-turner. Undead? Definitely. Unread? Never!

WORST BAND

1. 5 SECONDS OF SUMMER
2. FALLING IN REVERSE
3. HEY VIOLET
4. TWENTY ONE PILOTS
5. AS IT IS

■ Poor old 5SOS could start getting a bit of a complex, given that they've now been crowned (or should that be *frowned?*) worst band for *three years* in a row. So what do the Aussie lads think? They would comment, but they're too busy giving zero fucks.

CLOTHING COMPANY OF THE YEAR

1. DROP DEAD
2. HOT TOPIC
3. VANS
4. H&M
5. CONVERSE

■ This year may have been relatively quiet for Bring Me The Horizon, but Drop Dead, the clothing line founded by singer Oli Sykes, continues to go from strength to strength. And just when you think their garments couldn't get any cooler, or sell any quicker, they go and launch a Game Of Thrones line. Cue a battle to buy them.

BEST VIDEO GAME

1. DESTINY 2
2. SUPER MARIO ODYSSEY
3. CUPHEAD
4. STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II
5. CALL OF DUTY WWII

■ The multiplayer shooter that immerses you in a vast, mythical world is as addictive as a Pringle and Haribo buffet, and clearly a hit with you guys. Right, enough of this malarkey, let's jump online for a quick tear-up.

EMPIRE OF THE COATS

"So, my dad was routing through some old stuff and came across this denim jacket from over 25 years ago that he designed himself with Iron Maiden patches! Along with his 1990 No Prayer On The Road hat! I'm so proud of his creation!" says daughter of the Coolest Dad In The Whole World, ***@jayeexxx****. We really love this. Serious props to your pa for reminding us of The Evil That Men Denim. HAHAHAHAHAHA.*

HOLE IN MY ART

Here's ***@linalovesart****'s awesome drawing of Sleeping With Sirens guitarist Jack Fowler. Not only is this a great piece of art, it's also a sobering reminder that we need to visit a dentist soon. Seriously, if we had teeth that good we would never, ever shut our mouth.*

GO TO HELL, FOR HEAVEN'S CAKE

"As you can tell, I don't normally bake, but I tried my best!" says ***@EllieIsADragon****. Well, considering you've got scales and breathe fire, we're extra impressed with the results, Dragon Ellie. And we bet you save a fortune on your oven bills each year, so good on ya.*

PICS-BURGH

"I bumped into Ahren Stringer of The Amity Affliction just outside the Bullring a few hours before the first stop of the Kerrang! Tour," says ***Kirsty****. So Ahren had just been fighting bulls before he took to the stage that night? Wow, you'd never know. Wait – the Bullring is just the name of a place in Birmingham? Oh. As you were.*

WE DON'T HAVE TO DRAW

"After a long struggle, it's done! This was a challenge to make but I'm really happy with the turnout. Also I found a Bengals logo in one of the newspapers I used and had to put it in the portrait. Still working on getting out of my artblock and making some new concept drawing ideas as well," says ***@cynder8342****. Absolutely love the creativity behind this, despite the look of jealousy in Andy's eyes about the Bring Me The Horizon cake in front of him. Too bad, sucker, you're only 2D. All the more for us.*

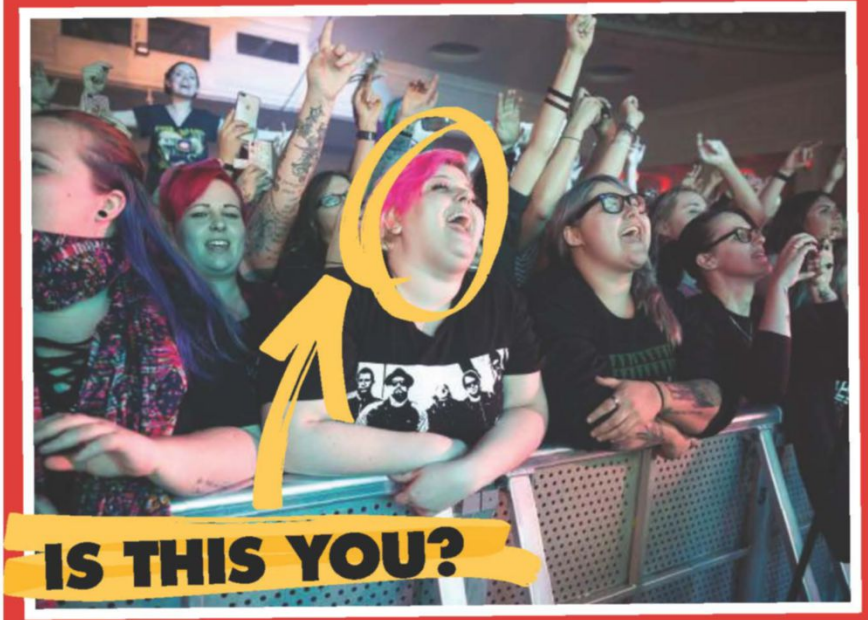
WELCOME TO THE BLACK ~~PARADE~~ PAINTING

"An old painting I forgot to post when I did it," admits the super-talented ***@nebula.img****. This is lovely! And we forgive you for not sending the pic in sooner – presumably you got distracted trying to have a staring contest with those intense eyes. That's exactly what we did. And we were doing pretty well, actually, until we, er, got a speck of dust in them. Crap.*

THE BEAUTIFUL PICTURE

"Met Marilyn Manson after years of supporting him – such a great dude! Can't wait to see him again in June at Download!" exclaims ***@flxralgxgh****. This rules. And we're thrilled to see that our Mazza is clearly keeping schtum about what happens in our wild cover feature with him over the page – good man. Congratulations, because you've won a Björn Gelotte Les Paul Custom guitar! Email Feedback@kerrang.com to claim your prize.*

FACE IN THE CROWD



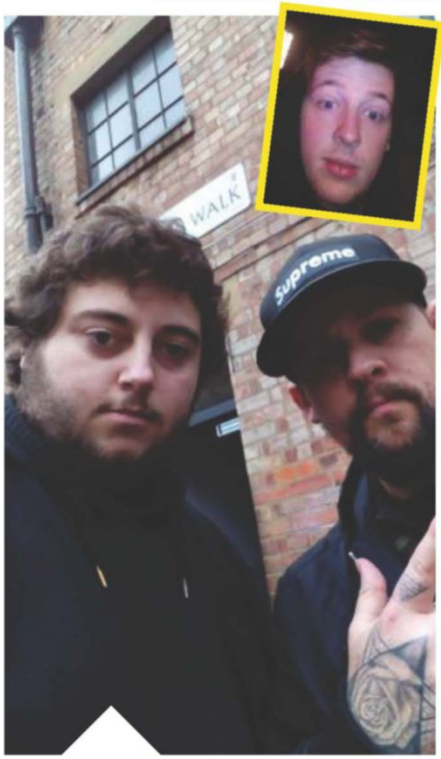
IS THIS YOU?

BAND: Good Charlotte
WHEN: 03.12.17
WHERE: O2 Academy Brixton, London

■ HELLO THERE, amazingly-coloured hair friend. Are you really in the moment watching pop-punk royalty Good Charlotte, or trying to catch a tiny Werther's Original in your mouth, thrown by Joel Madden? Either way, we think you're awesome. So drop us an email over at Feedback@kerrang.com with a pic of your ticket, as well as a photo of yourself ***BECAUSE YOU'VE ONLY GONE AND WON A PAIR OF TICKETS TO SEE MORE POP-PUNK ROYALTY IN THE FORM OF BOWLING FOR SOUP!***

THE SELFIES WILL NEVER END

"That time when I met Bring Me The Horizon's Jordan Fish on the way to Aldi – definitely more than I bargained for!" jokes ***@CarolineCoakley****. Very good! Just our kind of humour, that is. We've gotta say, we thought the BMTH man was more of a There Is A Hell, Believe Me I've Seen It, There Is A Heaven, Let's Keep It A Sainsbury's shopper, but hey-ho. Sorry, that was really awful. Bring Me The Horizon/supermarket puns aren't as easy as you might think. Anyway, don't mind us, we're just off to the Co-Op Your Blessings for some cheese. Laters.*



LIFESTYLES OF THE PICS AND FAMOUS

"I went to go see Good Charlotte and Against The Current at Brixton Academy, and before the show I met the band and Dan Gow took a selfie on my phone," reveals ***Rob****. Maybe Dan spotted yours and Joel's serious poses and was thinking, 'Hey, I need to give these guys something new to aspire to. Maybe an expression of surprise or something.' Good work, Dan.*

NEXT WEEK

WIN! SIGNED EMPLOYED TO SERVE VINYL

If you picked up last week's issue of Kerrang! – and we really hope you did – you'll know that we awarded Employed To Serve with our coveted Album Of The Year award. So it only makes sense to give away a copy on vinyl to one lucky reader, right? Right.

So, here's what we'd like to see from you… 1) Your predicted band of 2018 drawn as Star Wars: The Last Jedi characters. 2) A selfie with a rockstar of your choice doing karaoke. 3) A piece of cauliflower that looks like Brendon Urie. Surely that exists somewhere.

PHOTO: SAM LEES

TAG YOUR STUFF WITH #KOMMUNITY

*Show us via Twitter (***@KerrangMagazine***), Instagram (***kerrangmagazine_***) or* ***Feedback@kerrang.com****!*

Don't go expecting any presents this year, kids…

JINGLE HELL

CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR GIVING, APPARENTLY. WHICH IS WHY, FOR THIS SPECIAL ISSUE, WE'VE PRESENTS GALORE IN THE FORM OF YEAR-END INTERVIEWS WITH **ROCK'S BIGGEST STARS**; A DECADENT **K! CHRISTMAS LUNCH**; **WRAPPING PAPER**, A MONSTER **QUIZ**, AND EVERYTHING ELSE YOU NEED TO GET YOU THROUGH THE FESTIVE SEASON. SHAME, THEN, THAT BEFORE ALL THAT, **MARILYN MANSON** IS HERE TO DO THE GRINCH'S BIDDING...

WORDS: PAUL BRANNIGAN
PHOTOS: PEROU
DIGITAL ART: STEVE HORSFALL

"Get into bed with me..."

The voice is low but insistent, the words part-dare, part-order. Marilyn Manson pats the mattress on which he's stretched out and beckons Kerrang! into his darkened room on the fifth floor of Manchester's Lowry Hotel. "It's perfectly safe," he croaks, shuffling his cadaverous, black-clad six-foot frame across to the right-hand side of the bed. "You can keep your shoes on."

In the half-light, Manson's own footwear – rather than the slash of red lipstick across his pale face, or the ornate silver rings on his fingers – is the first thing you notice. On his right leg, he is sporting a clunky-looking, grey protective boot, not a stylistic rockstar affectation, but rather a medical necessity, following an accident onstage at New York's Hammerstein Ballroom on September 30.

On that evening, the third date of the singer's Heaven Upside Down tour, Manson was crushed beneath a falling stage prop, two large iron pistols, which snapped his fibula in two places, causing what he recalls as "excruciating" pain. As a result, the 48-year-old singer had to have a metal plate and 10 titanium screws put into his fibula, and has undertaken his winter tour of Europe in a wheelchair. "This is the most 'metal' I've ever been, Kerrang!," he notes drolly, tapping his boot.

"It's a major injury, but a minor setback," he insists. "It wasn't a good accident to suffer, but I'm

refusing to let any negative energy hold me back. Hopefully I'll be back on my feet by Christmas. That'll be the best gift I could give myself this year. Then I can pop the little star on the top of my tree, which is two-foot high and spray-painted black."

"So, wait," he says, "you know that I was on the cover of Kerrang! for Christmas once before?"

Yes indeed, sir. It was Christmas 1998. You had one hand down your pants in Scarlet Page's cover photo…

"Right! Well, I just had a meet-and-greet with my fans two days ago and someone had that photo tattooed on their entire thigh. It was quite impressive. The only thing I regret about that cover is that my pubic hair wasn't as well-groomed as it might have been…"

And we're off. An audience with Marilyn Manson, it might not entirely surprise you to learn, is an unpredictable, occasionally bewildering and hugely entertaining experience. "Time makes no linear sense to me, so I'll just flash forward and flash back in conversation," he cautions. "I'm worse than the TV show Lost." When the singer last met with representatives of the UK media, at a private members' club in Berlin in September, he conducted his interviews with a naked girl in his bed, a mound of white powder on his table, and a replica gun in his hand. One broadsheet newspaper interviewer was asked if he was "a poop man, a scat guy", and had his testicles flicked mid-question, an unanticipated turn of events that generated more headlines than any soundbite that came out of Manson's mouth.

This evening, Manson – no-one calls him 'Marilyn' – is in a rather more mellow and reflective mood, though these things are relative. "If you write a bad article I'll probably come and stab you in the throat with a knife," he rasps at one point, poking Kerrang! a couple of times in the neck with a bony finger for emphasis. "Merry Christmas, motherfucker! Hahaha!"

Manson, it should be noted, isn't a huge fan of Christmas. Partially, he says, this is because his birthday falls on January 5, and consequently he would traditionally get a "combination gift" to encompass both celebrations. "I've always got fucked at Christmas," he sighs. "Not sexually, but y'know, cheated in terms of gifts. Some of your readers will relate.

"My favourite thing about Christmas as a kid was sneaking a peek inside the wrapped presents under the tree, and then re-sealing them," he recalls. "My mom was a terrible present-wrapper. I remember the first time I was disappointed in Christmas was when I sneaked a look at one of the LPs that she had purchased for me and it was Europe's The Final Countdown. Thanks, mom!

"My favourite-ever present as a kid was a drum set from my parents. Man, if you want to fuck someone over at Christmas, give their kid a drum set. They'll hate you forever. I've a photo somewhere of me in my kitchen as a kid, playing my drums, the happiest kid in the world. It was a nice upgrade from playing the triangle in school, which is the most uncool instrument. I'm still very fond of making drum beats, but I learned pretty early on that you look more handsome with a microphone in your hand."

Hugh and Barbara Warner didn't ever bother their only son with the pretence of Father Christmas. Manson swears he was okay with this.

"I remember hearing that song I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus, and I always thought that'd be a pretty awkward song to listen to if you believed in Santa Claus," he muses. "You've got this big, fat, bearded home-invader leaving who-knows-what under your tree, and then you see your mom making out with this guy, and you're not supposed to tell your dad. What's that about? And people say *I'm* fucked up…"

Is Marilyn Manson a thoughtful gift-giver himself, though? What could Kerrang! expect in our stocking this Christmas if we were counted among your close friends?

"I always paint my friends," he says. "I do portrait paintings for them. I used to be a terrible gift-giver, just buying expensive wines whether the person drank wine or not, but my art feels like a more personal gift, and they can see that it's heartfelt and comes with the best of intentions. And now that people actually buy my art I guess they could always sell those paintings if we stop being friends."

For all his playfulness today, there's an undercurrent of melancholy and pathos when Manson dryly notes, "Christmas becomes increasingly exciting for me because there's less family around each year…" With the death of his father Hugh in July, this Christmas will be Manson's first as an orphan, his mother having passed away in 2014. The singer posted a moving tribute to his father in July – "He taught me how to be a man, a fighter and a survivor," he wrote on Instagram. "He taught me how to shoot a gun. How to drive. How to lead. He will always be the best dad in the world" – and although today Manson's speaks of "soldiering on" following his loss, it's evident that he has yet to find the time to fully process his grief or mourn, as the conversation this evening frequently circles back around to the subject.

"The value of life takes on extra significance when your parents are gone," he notes soberly at one point. "My father died within 30 minutes of me saying 'I love you' to him, and I don't want to sound cold, but it made me realise that I don't have time to fuck around here.

"I'm sure that over Christmas I'll probably dwell on the fact that I'm the last in the bloodline, given

Oh God, Uncle Manson's been on the plonk again…

"I'LL BE SPENDING CHRISTMAS WITH MY CATS. THEY'RE ASSHOLES"

“PEOPLE HAVE MISTAKEN MY KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY FOR WEAKNESS...”

Door frames: forever winding Manson up

that I don't have any brothers and sisters. That doesn't mean – girls who're listening, he says, in parentheses, I'm writing this article for you now – that I want to start breeding this Christmas, but it's just me and my boys now."

Your boys?

"My cats. William 'Bright Boy' Manson, and Rusty Manson. They're a year old and they're assholes. They're Devon Rexes, short-haired British cats, so technically that's your fault. They're a cross-breed, and they get called 'monkeys in cat suits'. I know they're going to fuck up my Christmas tree. William will just look at me, swipe my drink onto the floor, then look at me again like, [nonchalantly] 'What?' They're really ornery, it's like having terrible children. Maybe I should get them drum kits…"

THE GOD OF RESOLUTIONS

MANSON ON WHY 2018 ISN'T GOING TO BRING SWEEPING CHANGES TO HIS LIFE – OR BEDROOM

"I never live up to my resolutions," says Manson, "but I just want to make 2018 better than 2017. This year provided proof that you can't control life and death, but by force of will you can make your life better. Mostly I just want to enjoy fucking doing my job. Not that I consider what I do as a job – I say it's a job in the same that a blowjob is a job, both are art rather than work… and you don't get unemployment cover for not doing them. But my resolution for 2018 is to continue to keep creating scenarios that involve both art and blowjobs."

When he reflects back upon his year, Marilyn Manson describes 2017 as "a great year… but with sobering moments." As a highlight, he identifies the positive reception October's Heaven Upside Down has received among his friends, "and strangers too." While his father's death and his onstage accident were obvious low points, they were not the only dark stains on the past 12 months of his life. Manson's former bandmate Daisy Berkowitz, aka Scott Putesky, passed away in October, and that same month the singer dismissed his long-time friend and bassist Twiggy Ramirez (Jeordie White) from his touring band following allegations of rape and sexual assault from Twiggy's ex-girlfriend Jessicka Addams, the former singer of Manson's 'sister band', Jack Off Jill.

"I did not divorce Twiggy as a friend or brother, because I still care about him greatly," he says, picking his words slowly and carefully. "But I can't say that my musical relationship with Twiggy has been good for several years. My relationship with [musical collaborator] Tyler Bates on The Pale Emperor made something open up in me and I didn't want to let negative energy back in my life.

"There were other people in my life that I thought were friends that I had to cut out this year, a lot of betrayals that surprised me, and I had to clean house and adopt a new attitude. People mistook my kindness and generosity for weakness. So I kinda adapted this attitude, like, 'If you fuck with me, there will be consequences…' I have issues with intimacy. That might sound weird given that we're lying in bed together, but y'know…"

One friend who Manson has kept close this year is Johnny Depp. The actor had starring roles in Manson's purposely NSFW videos for SAY10 and KILL4ME, appearing onstage with him at last week's SSE Arena, Wembley show, and there's genuine affection in Manson's voice when he speaks of their relationship. Not least, it transpires, because he views Johnny as a positive influence in his life.

"The first book that Johnny Depp ever gave me – and I say Johnny Depp because we've always had a pact to use our full names – was Jean Cocteau's Opium," Manson says. "It talks about the pleasure of being on drugs, but also cautions that you'll have all these ideas but you can't grasp them or benefit from them. That made a lot of sense to me. You can indulge in cocaine or absinthe or whatever and you get all these crazy ideas, but you don't end up doing anything about them, and that's what I was tired of doing in life. I was tired of having so many ideas and not completing them. So I had to eliminate worthless conversations, drugs that confuse me, and everything that is negative. I'm not sober – life should never be a straight line, because that's boring – but if you keep doing things that are fucking shit up, stop doing it."

Much of Manson's newfound positivity is rooted in his pride in Heaven Upside Down. He's effusive in his praise of Tyler Bates, his musical director, and clearly very fond of the 52-year-old musician, who had to sit out Manson's UK tour due to prior commitments with TV and movie work.

The two men met through their mutual involvement in the U.S. TV series Californication, part of which was shot in the 'Houdini House' mansion in Los Angeles, where Manson recorded 2000's masterful Holy Wood… album, and the singer sees their friendship as fated, one more example of the mysterious, unexplainable ways in which life is ordered amid chaos. Another close friend is Newcastle-born Sons Of Anarchy actor Charlie Hunnam, with whom Manson spent his past two Christmases. "He loves to cook things, and we love to allegedly smoke marijuana together in the holiday spirit of the yule log," he laughs.

And this Christmas?

"I haven't made any plans," Manson admits. "I just want to have a good one. Hopefully I'll spend it with someone that cares about me."

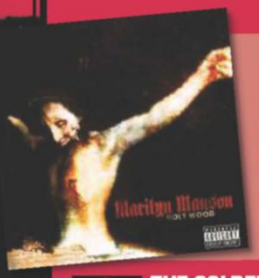
As relatable as he can be at unguarded moments like this, it's hard to imagine what it's truly like being Marilyn Manson, for whom life is so often performance art. He might refer to himself as "white trash from Ohio", but the randomness of his day-to-day life is highlighted at one point today when he reveals that he'll be having dinner in Manchester this evening with David Hasselhoff, without actually explaining why this is happening. The singer describes himself as being "a high-functioning autistic" – "I have an IQ of 170," he says. "I tried to drink it down to 150" – and he confesses to often feeling awkward in crowds ("Somewhat ironic given the career I've chosen"). At another point in our conversation he compares himself to the sociopathic Negan from The Walking Dead, "neither a hero or a villain".

"I've often been told by romantic partners that life isn't a TV show and it's not a movie," he admits. "I always try to explain that these things are written by people who are real and if I identify with someone I'm not trying to say that I *am* that person, or that I believe that our relationship is like this movie we're watching. But I can get obsessed with characters. Like, I got totally sucked into True Detective because of Matthew McConaughey's character, Rust, and his perception of life as being a flat circle. My cat Rusty is named after him. And with my art I try to make things that make people think in different ways, too. There is shit that I want to fuck up."

In conversation today it's striking that the 2017 model Manson appears more self-assured and grounded than ever, less prone to making provocative, controversy-courting statements for

DISPOSABLE TUNES?

MANSON SEPARATES THE GOLDEN FROM THE GROTESQUE IN HIS LIFETIME OF WORK...



1 HOLY WOOD (IN THE SHADOW OF THE VALLEY OF DEATH) (2000)

"I hate you for making me do this, but I'll rank these albums on an emotional scale," says Manson. "And this is the most important record, in my heart, maybe because it came straight after Columbine [the 1999 U.S. high school shooting, which sections of the media suggested Manson's music had inspired]. It's not my most personal or confessional record, but maybe in some ways it is because I was talking about all the things in my head."

2 THE GOLDEN AGE OF GROTESQUE (2003)

Manson's stylish, slick fifth album, partially inspired by burlesque, cabaret and vaudeville shows in 1920s Berlin. "This album is a snapshot of my favourite transition in life. It was while I was married and it was a very creative time for me. It was a time when I felt that I didn't have to define myself simply by music – I had my first art show around this time – but I felt like I could be truly me."

3 ANTICHRIST SUPERSTAR (1996)

Manson's revelatory breakthrough album, an elaborate rock opera. "People might think that this is the definitive Marilyn Manson record," he acknowledges. "It was a tough time making it, though. New Orleans is a dark, sinister place. I remember Jonathan Davis from Korn came to stay with me there to get sober... bad idea. Objectively I can see that it's an important album."

4 MECHANICAL ANIMALS (1998)

"I wrote this record when I went to Hollywood, and it was my introduction to the world of fame," Manson explains. "But I wrote about that fame *before* I was famous, so it was more like an omen, or a portent of what was to come. I really like the way that this record sounds, though I hated it at the time, and [producer] Michael Beinhorn was a bit of a prick."

5 EAT ME, DRINK ME (2007)

Manson admits that "this was written and recorded during a dark time in my life and it's my most personal record, lyrically. But in some ways it's my least favourite record because of the emotional attachment that I have to it. I was going through my divorce [from model/actress/burlesque icon Dita Von Teese] at the time, so it's hard record for me to revisit."

6 THE HIGH END OF LOW (2009)

"This was when I went insane, for real. I think I had a psychotic breakdown making this. Those pictures of the crazy writing on my walls? That wasn't for a photo shoot, that was how I lived at the time. I think it's great record – it was the last great collaboration between Twiggy [Ramirez] and I – but it came at a bad point in my life. Four Rusted Horses and Devour are great songs, though."

7 BORN VILLAIN (2012)

"This was a really painfully tortuous record to make, a very troublesome collaboration," Manson remembers of Born Villain's creation. "Jeordie [aka Twiggy] wasn't in a good place at the time, and although he played guitar on the record, I had to replay a lot of them: I learned how to play guitar just to do that, so one of my biggest memories of this is the blisters I had on my fucking fingers."

8 PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY (1994)

"This is where it all began. For the longest time I didn't think this album was as good as it could have been, but now when I listen to it, it sounds way better than I remember. We recorded part of this at the Sharon Tate house [10050 Cielo Drive in Los Angeles, where the Manson 'Family' murders were committed in 1969]. I won't confirm that I had sex there with an ex-girlfriend."

UNRANKED THE PALE EMPEROR (2015) & HEAVEN UPSIDE DOWN (2017)

"It's too soon to compare these two records to anything else," says Manson. "If I look at Eat Me..., High End Of Low and Born Villain, I was expressing myself emotionally, but I wasn't who I wanted to be. Working with Tyler Bates has been a rebirth, and these two might be my favourite records. These two are a comeback for what I felt I wasn't doing properly on those middle-period records."

the sake of it. Then again, with Donald Trump in The White House, re-writing history hour-by-hour with pronouncements that the most crazed Hollywood auteur would consider beyond the pale, what could Manson say in 2017 that could truly shock? Manson is still razor-sharp – during one rambling reference to Satanism, the phone in the room inexplicably rings out, and without missing a beat, the singer drawls, "That's the Devil checking in with me as he heard me call his name" – but he seems more considered with his provocations.

Despite Heaven Upside Down being trailered on the eve of the 2016 U.S. election with a video which appeared to reference Manson decapitating a symbolic Donald Trump-styled character – "People see what they want to see," he says, somewhat mischievously, as if this interpretation was entirely unanticipated – he's emphatic that the ascension of America's lamentable commander-in-chief had zero influence on the album.

"It had no influence whatsoever on the record," he insists. "I don't want to talk about politics; I want people to focus on something else, like, don't look at that, look at this. Actually my father had more influence on the album, because when I look back at the lyrics, I can see subconscious references. My father was going to be a Jesuit priest before he got sent to Vietnam, aged 17. He used to tell me that he never drank or took drugs in Vietnam, but later in life, when he was ill, he said, 'Of course I did, how could you not when you spend your days blowing up people?' He said 'Forget about PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], son, that's not the problem. How do you come back from a world where you're really good at doing your job, but your job is killing people? You're supposed to go back after that to a job as a grocery store manager?'

"You might think my vision of the world is dark, but just imagine how much darker and more fucked it looked through my father's eyes."

It's at this point in the conversation where light from the 'supermoon' above Manchester this evening begins to penetrate the drawn curtains in Manson's room. The singer switches off the table lamp by the bedside, accidentally smashing it in the process, so that the room is in complete darkness.

"Look," he says. "Do you see what I see?"

Staring across the room, from our vantage point on Manson's bed, an inverted cross of light is clearly visible on the carpet.

"What could be more appropriate for Kerrang!?" Manson laughs, reaching for his phone to snap a photo. "Let me take a picture of this. That's Heaven upside down right there."

Our hour with Manson is up. His wheelchair is rolled into the room. Dinner with Hasselhoff awaits. Manson gets to his feet somewhat tentatively, and stretches out his arms for a hug. Indeed as Kerrang! bids him farewell, he leans in for a second hug.

"Thanks for listening," he tells us. "And Merry Christmas."

Walking back towards the lift, Kerrang! notices for the first time a quote painted on the wall outside Manson's room.

"Manchester is the place where people do things," it reads, quoting What The Judge Saw by Judge Parry, published in 1912. "Don't talk about what you are going to do, do it."

As guidance for the road ahead, the newly-engaged, clear-headed and highly-motivated Marilyn Manson has probably had worse advice.

HEAVEN UPSIDE DOWN IS OUT NOW VIA CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. MARILYN MANSON PLAYS DOWNLOAD 2018 NEXT JUNE – SEE THE GIG GUIDE

Don't let anyone ever tell you you're too old for the school nativity

"MY FATHER'S DEATH MADE ME REALISE I DON'T HAVE TIME TO FUCK AROUND"

MY 2017

AS THE FINAL FEW DAYS OF THE YEAR TICK AWAY, ROCK'S GREAT AND GOOD REFLECT ON THE JOURNEY OF THEIR PAST 12 MONTHS...

SIMON NEIL

BIFFY CLYRO

OUR SI REFLECTS ON A YEAR IN WHICH HE TOURED WITH GN'R, EMULATED NIRVANA, AND COVERED HIS FAVOURITE SONG...

Q&A

HOW HAS YOUR 2017 BEEN, SIMON?

"As a year for Biffy, it's been off the hook! I can't believe how many records we've made now, and I can't wait to get the new stuff going. It's been 18 months since the last record, so I'm feeling very creative."

WHAT'S KEPT THINGS CHALLENGING FOR YOU?

"We went to the States four times. We felt like we had something to prove again, and I think that's what we as a band need to be in our best headspace. Personally, everything about the world has felt so alarming, so I have a feeling of mild panic at all times – whether it's fucking Brexit or America with Trump in charge; the world is like a touchpaper, waiting to go up. [in flames] It's terrifying!"

SPEAKING OF HAVING SOMETHING TO PROVE, YOU HEADLINED DOWNLOAD THIS YEAR. DID YOU ENJOY IT?

"A lot of people that like metal don't necessarily know that our roots are in really heavy music – that's where our education came from. Donington has always been such a big deal to me, and part of the reason we were so excited to do it was because I knew some people would say, 'Why are they asking these pop bastards to play?' I couldn't wait to get up there and disprove people that had written us off. That wasn't the overriding emotion of the night, but I do remember thinking, 'We're going to play one of our best fucking shows!' Metallica taught me how to play; Guns N' Roses taught me how to play; Black Sabbath taught me how to play – so hopefully people had a newfound respect for our band. In the history books, we're going to be on a level pegging with those bands, which means so much to me."

YOU MENTIONED GUNS N' ROSES, WHO YOU PLAYED FOUR SHOWS WITH. CAN YOU DESCRIBE HOW THAT FELT, AS A HUGE FAN OF THE BAND?

"I remember my friend Martin and I watching a Guns N' Roses concert from Paris in, I think, 1991, on Sky. And then, 26 years later, we got to play with GN'R in Paris, which I flew Martin out for. We watched the whole show, and sang every single song, and it was one of the most beautiful moments of our lives. There was so much from that night that was perfect. When you've been doing it for this long, there are very few occasions when you really get the chance to take a step back and go, 'Fucking hell, we haven't done too badly.' I didn't get to meet Axl, but we did get to say hi to Duff and Slash – so, Axl, you're still on my hit list!"

> "I'M SWITCHING TO BEAT-YOU-AROUND-THE-HEAD MODE..."

AS BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS GO, YOU PLAYING MTV UNPLUGGED AND SINGING GOD ONLY KNOWS BY THE BEACH BOYS WAS UP THERE. HOW WAS THAT?

"That's the sort of moment that's so high on the scale that you never come back down from it! It took me about a week to process that show. I had to try to not think about Nirvana when we did it, because we used to rehearse their MTV Unplugged set, including all the chat between songs and even the bits when they're tuning, down to the last detail. I know that God Only Knows is a sacred cow that no-one should really cover, but it means so much to me. It was the first dance at my wedding, and I once met Brian Wilson and showed him my tattoo [Simon has the words 'God Only Knows...' on his chest], but I wanted to strip it down and make it as close to me doing it as I could, rather than doing an impression. I'm normally physically exhausted after a show, but because it was an acoustic gig and I was sitting down for it, I wasn't tired at all, so could hardly sleep for two days afterwards!"

WHAT'S BEEN THE BIGGEST LESSON THAT YOU'VE LEARNED THIS YEAR?

"This year reminded me that our fans, and people that are into music, share the same values that we do, wherever we go in the world. We've spent a lot of time in the States, and met people who said that Trump doesn't represent them. Similarly, when we were touring in Europe, I was telling people that Brexit doesn't represent us. What's been most upsetting is that I thought the world was evolving, and that people's values were improving, but the last few years have made me realise these bad people have been biding their time, so I've been upset that there are so many with such backward looking views. I saw someone post something on Twitter that said, '2007 – it's great that everyone has a voice; 2017 – this is the worst thing ever, because everyone has a voice.' I kind of agree with that. The fact that honesty and truthfulness have lost their value has freaked me out."

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ON ELLIPSIS THAT YOU'D LIKE TO CARRY INTO 2018?

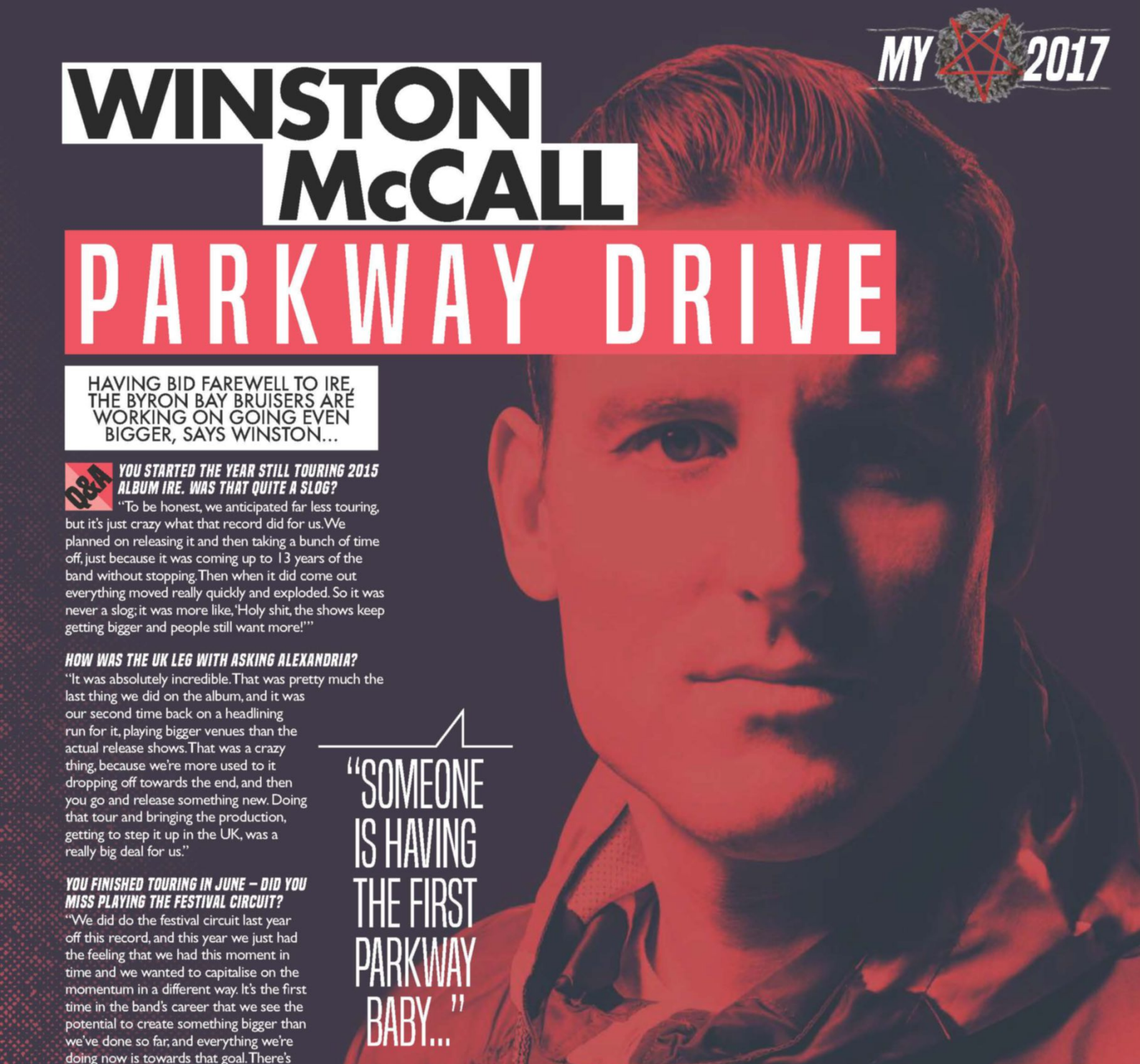
"I would never change anything about our records, as it's what we wanted to do at the time, but thinking about Ellipsis, I might have liked to have made it longer. I had my mind set on making it 11 songs since we made Opposites [2013], which was 22 songs, but that's the one thing that I wish I'd maybe allowed myself to waver on. It's the only time I've really stuck to an idea, even though my instinct was saying, 'This song should really go on there.' Musically, I love where we're going, because it broadens our horizons. I don't ever want us to blinker ourselves. I always want us to be a rock band, but each album leads on to the next challenge, because I usually want to make things slightly more complex. The last album was very simple, deliberately, and there weren't too many moments on it that were supposed to beat you around the head, although there were some moments that did that. I'm definitely switching back into the beat-you-around-the-head mode, as every song I write at the moment is pretty full-on."

WORDS: JAMES HICKIE

WINSTON McCALL

PARKWAY DRIVE

HAVING BID FAREWELL TO IRE, THE BYRON BAY BRUISERS ARE WORKING ON GOING EVEN BIGGER, SAYS WINSTON...



Q&A YOU STARTED THE YEAR STILL TOURING 2015 ALBUM IRE. WAS THAT QUITE A SLOG?

"To be honest, we anticipated far less touring, but it's just crazy what that record did for us. We planned on releasing it and then taking a bunch of time off, just because it was coming up to 13 years of the band without stopping. Then when it did come out everything moved really quickly and exploded. So it was never a slog; it was more like, 'Holy shit, the shows keep getting bigger and people still want more!'"

HOW WAS THE UK LEG WITH ASKING ALEXANDRIA?

"It was absolutely incredible. That was pretty much the last thing we did on the album, and it was our second time back on a headlining run for it, playing bigger venues than the actual release shows. That was a crazy thing, because we're more used to it dropping off towards the end, and then you go and release something new. Doing that tour and bringing the production, getting to step it up in the UK, was a really big deal for us."

"SOMEONE IS HAVING THE FIRST PARKWAY BABY..."

YOU FINISHED TOURING IN JUNE – DID YOU MISS PLAYING THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT?

"We did do the festival circuit last year off this record, and this year we just had the feeling that we had this moment in time and we wanted to capitalise on the momentum in a different way. It's the first time in the band's career that we see the potential to create something bigger than we've done so far, and everything we're doing now is towards that goal. There's a longer-term plan in place for what we want to achieve. That didn't include festivals this time, but it will next year!"

HOW MUCH OF THE YEAR HAS MAKING YOUR FORTHCOMING SIXTH ALBUM TAKEN UP?

"A hell of a lot. It's not so much that it's been difficult to create, but it's something that we've wanted to put a lot of effort into. We're not a band that can say, 'Right, we're going into the studio for a month, and then come out with a record.' It takes us a while to write, and these days we're aware of what time and space we need to do these things. We go about it in our own way, but for better or worse it does take us a long while to actually craft our music."

IRE TOOK YOU IN A FEW DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS MUSICALLY. WILL THE NEW ONE CONTINUE THAT?

"Let's just say that the concept behind going in a few different directions is one that we've held onto. The directions and the themes and the sounds that we're aiming for on the next record, will all combine so that it's Parkway Drive as you know it, but it's also Parkway as you would never have expected."

YOU'RE STARTING 2018 PLAYING YOUR HORIZONS ALBUM IN FULL IN AUSTRALIA. SHOULDN'T THAT HAVE BEEN THIS YEAR, GIVEN THAT IT CAME OUT IN 2007?

"Yes, it should, but we just didn't have the space to do it this year, and you're the only one to have picked up on that! If we announced it this year it doesn't matter if we play it next year, right? And I don't think fans care about the date so much as the fact that we're playing that album in full, which is pretty crazy. We never thought we'd have an album impact that long!"

WILL YOU TAKE THE TOUR OUTSIDE OF AUSTRALIA?

"We'll have to see how we go. It was the fact that we knew people loved this record, especially in Australia, so we thought we'd do a few shows for the fans. We did not expect the response we got online and from the ticket sales. It's messed-up how quickly those shows moved, so it's made us re-evaluate. It's definitely a possibility, and even if not, we'll probably end up resurrecting some of those songs for the main set. There are a lot of songs on there that we haven't played for a long time."

DO YOU TEND TO DO NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS?

"Not so much because, especially with band stuff, we have a habit of going in the opposite direction. I'm cursed with that, so if I say, 'Have more time off, treat yourself well,' it will end up the busiest year ever. Or if I want to focus on health we'll all end up sick and breaking bones. I've given up giving things up!"

WHAT'S BEEN THE BEST THING ABOUT 2017?

"It's difficult because we've had such an amazing year. We've played some great shows, but one other thing is that someone in the band is having a kid, which is really cool. I'm not going to say who because it's not for me to announce, but it's the first Parkway child! Other than that, making the new record has been the best thing, for me."

AND WHAT WAS THE WORST THING?

"Donald Trump becoming the U.S. President. He seemed like a bit of a lunatic in the first place, but it's also the way the country has split and reacted. It's fucking scary."

WORDS: PAUL TRAVERS **PHOTO:** TOM BARNES

LYNN GUNN PVRIS

LYNN'S HAD HER DOUBTS DURING A CHALLENGING 12 MONTHS, BUT IS STARTING TO APPRECIATE PVRIS' MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS...

Q&A IT'S BEEN A WILD 2017, LYNN! CAN YOU SUM UP YOURS IN THREE WORDS?

"First up, I'd say 'transformative'. That's a constant thing with me, but this year has been extremely transformative. Second would be 'enjoyable', just because it was. Third would be 'touring', just because there really has been so much of that!"

HAS IT FELT AS TRIUMPHANT FOR PVRIS?

"Being totally honest… no. Personally, from the inside, it's felt like the opposite for much of the year. Fortunately, over the past few weeks, I've managed to step back from things a little bit and see things the way other people have – in a way that I maybe wasn't able to before. Playing the big shows we have, particularly towards the end of the year, have provided those big occasions that really slap you in the face and tell you to be present in the moment."

WHAT MEMORIES WILL DEFINE 2017 FOR YOU?

"I think I'll remember all of the challenges and triumphs I've already discussed at length this year – being able to embrace and enjoy touring, facing up to personal and professional challenges, and evolving as we overcome those. Something I've not spoken about so much – a really big thing – was this personal realisation [I experienced] before we went back out on tour.

"I started to get really interested in other creative outlets: tattooing, photography, drawing and a lot of the things I hadn't done in a really long time. It was this realisation that my creativity didn't need to be defined by PVRIS' career. There are so many other facets to it, so many different roads that I could go down. PVRIS is just one part of my life as an artist. That [epiphany] – that we can compartmentalise the band – really took a weight off and made it so much easier to enjoy and appreciate what we do as PVRIS."

> "THERE ARE SO MANY ROADS THAT I COULD GO DOWN..."

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE RECORDING AND RELEASE OF YOUR LANDMARK SECOND ALBUM SHAPED YOUR 2017?

"I think a lot of the stuff I wrote on the record is still pretty relevant now. It deals with a lot of these same [struggles] that I'm still navigating and working through. I think it's been really cool to perform those songs on tour and see how our audience are responding to them while still going through those things [behind the lyrics]. It allows us a different perspective – songs that were written in the stillness of the studio seem different in the motion of touring. They seem more out-there, more alive. It's interesting to see which problems still relate, and which have maybe changed shape or been resolved."

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES YOUR FANS' INTERPRETATION OF YOUR MUSIC ALLOW YOU TO REAPPRAISE THOSE CONCEPTS?

"It can make a huge difference. When I'm writing, I'll often sit there and think, 'No-one is going to be able to understand this reference,' or, 'No-one is going to be able to understand this feeling.' But these are the simplest, most human feelings you could possibly imagine. It allows me to realise, 'Of course people connect with it!'"

READING & LEEDS WERE A STRUGGLE FOR PVRIS, BUT WHAT SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT CAME WITH PLAYING THE MAIN STAGE?

"Frankly, I just don't think I was ready for it, personally. It really felt like being thrown into an uncomfortable show. That said, it did allow me to reflect and improve. It granted a realisation of the true pace at which things are moving and I'm happy with the direction they're heading in. It's an opportunity to get ready and rebuild a little bit. That was definitely one of the moments that made me stop and think about where we're at."

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST SHOW YOU'VE PLAYED?

"I'd have to say it was the last hometown show we got to play – at the Boston House of Blues. It's always really crazy; every time we go back to Boston to see how much it's grown since the last time we were there. It's great to be around our friends and family and for them to see how it's grown, too. It's such a beautiful thing. It was funny because I looked up and could see my grandma on the balcony just throwing up the Devil horns and really rocking out.

"One of the biggest moments was after we left the show, driving back to my parents' house. My grandma and I were in the backseat and we just had this great heart-to-heart about following our dreams and our different philosophies on it. It was the first time I ever really felt like I had an adult conversation with my grandma, and felt that we were on the same page. That was such a beautiful moment."

WHAT MEMORY FROM 2017 WILL YOU ALWAYS LOOK BACK ON AND LAUGH ABOUT?

"Our whole on-the-road family are very humour-based. It feels like every day can be pretty funny. One memory that sticks out was when we received these different food costumes – hotdogs, bacon and a couple of others – during a meet-and-greet. We ended up getting our in-ear monitor technician to wear the hotdog outfit for the whole set. Him just standing there, side stage, in that outfit was a highlight."

WORDS: SAM LAW **PHOTO:** MATTY VOGEL

FRANK IERO

LAST YEAR WAS TOUGH FOR FRANK, BUT HE GOT BACK ON THE HORSE AND RETURNED AT FULL GALLOP IN 2017...

Q&A

THIS TIME LAST YEAR THINGS WERE VERY DIFFERENT IN YOUR WORLD, BUT 2017 HAS BEEN A LOT KINDER. HOW DO YOU FEEL LOOKING BACK ON IT ALL?

"It's been crazy. I started out not knowing if we were going to get to play again at all, then trying to get out on the road somehow, to ending up spending almost the entire year on the road, and now just trying to get off again! It feels like an accomplishment. We came back really strong, and this year feels like winning the rematch. I've got a few more shows left to finish up and I'm looking at those like the last lengths of the victory lap. I've got to hang out with friends, play lots of cool shows, put out some new music, spend some time with my family, and I've watched a lot of Liverpool matches."

WHAT HAVE YOU MADE OF JÜRGEN KLOPP'S 2017 WITH THE REDS?

"Decent, but I wish there weren't so many ties! I was hoping for the win against Chelsea recently, but I guess I'm used to the disappointment because I'm a New York Knicks fan, too, so I've had lots of training."

LOOKING BACK AT YOUR HIGHLIGHTS, DID THIS YEAR FEEL LIKE ONE BIG BLESSING?

"One hundred per cent. There were so many bucket list moments this year, and things that I've always wanted to achieve that I have. To do that in spite of a tragedy makes it all the more sweet. I think that's what we really needed this year. If it had gone any other way, it would have been detrimental to the psyche."

IS IT ODD TO THINK HOW YOUR PERSONAL FORTUNES HAVE TURNED AROUND IN CONTRAST TO THE WORLD IN GENERAL SEEMINGLY GETTING A LITTLE DARKER BY THE DAY?

"That's the thing with me. If it's sunny I bring the rain and that's always the way my shit works. This whole year has almost been like the Upside Down. Worldwide, politically and in music, too, there's been a lot of tragedy. We've lost a lot of amazing people, which has made it hard to see a silver lining, but I think that's why deep down people are wonderful creatures. We can pull ourselves back up and make shit good again. When you come close to true darkness you embrace light where you find it. All those old clichés are true, that's why they're so often said. As a young person you get really tired of old people telling you the same fucking thing over again, and you try to rage against that, but eventually you find out, 'Damn, these old motherfuckers were right! They knew.'"

> "I HAD AN EXPERIENCE I DIDN'T KNOW I WANTED OR NEEDED..."

WHAT WERE YOUR PERSONAL SILVER LININGS?

"Definitely just getting back up onstage and playing songs again. Honestly, looking back now, it's true what they say about hindsight being 20/20 and maybe I did it a little prematurely, because I'm definitely feeling the effects of it, but that triumph was so important to my psyche and the band's. It was a huge milestone. Also, in this past year I think I've learned a lifetime's worth of lessons. Sometimes you need to experience everything you love being taken from you in order to appreciate things a little more. It's funny, I wrote a record about things happening for you and not to you, and then I had an experience happen for me that I maybe didn't know I needed or wanted. I take a lot of really great things from it and of course there was a lot of bullshit that came along with it, too. But I learned a lot."

THAT MUST BE QUITE THE EYE-OPENER IN YOUR MID-30S WHEN YOU'D ASSUME YOU HAVE LIFE MOSTLY FIGURED OUT?

"Absolutely. I think good training for that is to be an artist, living in the art is to constantly learn, change and evolve with new things, because if you're not it's total death. I've always been pretty aware that I don't know a fucking thing (*laughs*)! I think that's what keeps me going. Once you stop learning, you may as well just pack it up and go home."

WERE THERE ANY DISAPPOINTMENTS THIS YEAR?

"Absolutely – not getting home enough. The hardest part of touring, going away for weeks and months at a time, living in this make-believe world of travel and venues, you expect when you get home that life is the same as when you left it, but that's not true. When you're not there, life carries on without you. That's a hard thing to do. It's almost like coming home from war. You don't really know how to deal with real life."

ON A DIFFERENT NOTE, YOU BECAME SOMETHING OF A FILM STAR THIS YEAR WITH A CAMEO ROLE IN (ROMANCE) IN THE DIGITAL AGE. WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

"It was a blast. That was one of those things where friends were doing this thing and put feelers out for who else was in town that might be a good fit. John Nolan [Taking Back Sunday] reached out to me, and I happened to be free. It was a lot of fun."

WORKING WITH STEVE ALBINI ON KEEP THE COFFINS COMING MUST HAVE BEEN A HIGHLIGHT, TOO, RIGHT?

"I'd been preparing for that since I was 13 years old. When I realised he was the thread between all the records that make me feel a certain way and make me want to play music, everything clicked: start a band, write a song and then record with Steve Albini."

WORDS: DAVID McLAUGHLIN

ALEX GASKARTH

ALL TIME LOW

WHETHER IT'S ON THE SOFA OR THE SLOPES, ALEX PLANS TO SPEND HIS XMAS ON HIS ARSE...

"I HOPE THAT IN 2018, WE CAN DO A BETTER JOB OF LISTENING TO EACH OTHER"

Q&A

HOW WOULD YOU SUM UP ATL'S YEAR?

"It's been amazing. It's felt like a year of progress; there's been a lot of steps in new directions. We're over 10 years into our career and still get to do new things. I feel really lucky for that. We've had an amazing run on this record so far."

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PERSONAL HIGHLIGHT OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

"There's been a lot. Putting [Last Young Renegade] out was a big one. Having some success with American radio has been a huge accomplishment for us after all these years. Getting to make a really cool set of videos for this album has been something we've wanted to do for a long time. The tours, the travel… It's been a collection of great experiences."

THE GOOD TIMES VIDEO REALLY RESONATED WITH YOUR FANS. WHAT WAS THE THINKING BEHIND IT?

"We wanted it to give hope to people from all different walks of life, especially young people. I feel like in this day and age, what with a lot of the things that are going on right now, I think a lot of young people feel very lost, especially the ones who feel as though the lifestyle they've chosen to live, or background, or their heritage or whatever is coming under fire. It's a time to make sure those people know they're loved and accepted and are allowed to flourish and thrive as the person they want to be. That's the message we wanted to communicate."

TELL US ABOUT THE WORK THE BAND DID FOR THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION THIS YEAR. YOU RAISED $24,000...

"That charity is doing a lot of good work. They were one of the louder voices against the injustices that I feel were happening in the States at the time. It wasn't about politicising anything; it's just about maintaining and establishing what is just and fair. It was incredible that we were able to raise that money, and I extend a massive thank you to the people who donated directly, or picked up one of the shirts from that limited run."

HOW'S LIFE UNDER TRUMP? THE WORLD HASN'T EXPLODED YET, SO THAT'S A POSITIVE...

"It's just dark times. It feels like there's a lot of negativity and arguing. One of the things that breaks my heart is that people are unwilling to hear one another out. I hope that in 2018 we as people can do a better job of listening to each other and try to progress rather than just yelling at a brick wall. It's complicated and polarising and I hope we can realise what's right and what's fair, and come to some understanding."

LAST YOUNG RENEGADE WAS RELEASED IN JUNE. WHAT WAS THE FEELING LIKE IN THE BAND IN THE WEEKS LEADING UP TO THAT?

"Any time you have an album coming out, you're sitting there biting your nails. We knew we were putting out some different sounding songs and overall trying to grow the sound of All Time Low. Now it's out in the world and flourishing, and one of the things I'm proud of is how these songs have translated live."

YOU ALSO RECORDED A COVER OF LONGVIEW FOR SPOTIFY'S SERIES, GREEN DAY: THE EARLY YEARS. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

"That came up really randomly. Spotify reached out to bands who were inspired and influenced by Green Day. We were in a massive way and we've also had the pleasure of touring with them. It was fun to do. We've been playing some of those songs since we were 13, and it was fun to put a twist on it."

YOU'VE TOURED WITH SWMRS THIS YEAR. IS JOEY ARMSTRONG A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK?

"Absolutely. When we first toured with SWMRS, I didn't realise Joey was an *Armstrong*. For the first couple of shows, I was like, 'He reminds me of someone…' Then I said it to one of the guys, and they said, 'You realise he's Billie Joe's son, right?!'"

WHAT WAS THAT UK TOUR LIKE?

"That tour was a blast. What was great was that we got to play some places that we've really never played very often, like Cambridge or Brighton. It was awesome to get around and play the places we've missed over the years. Waterparks and SWMRS were a blast to play with, too."

YOU TURNED 30 THIS MONTH. ARE YOU FREAKING OUT?

"Not really. It's something I accepted a little while ago. You get older. It happens. I'm not super-precious about my birthday, which might have something to do with being born so close to Christmas!"

WHERE WILL YOU BE SPENDING CHRISTMAS?

"I'll be taking it easy at home. Christmas is a time for me to shut down, not answer phone calls and just *be*. I've not done much snowboarding this year, so I'd like to do that."

WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR IN 2018?

"To get out there and play rock'n'roll shows to a shit-load of people!"

WORDS: SIMON YOUNG **PHOTO:** TOM BARNES

DANNY WORSNOP

ASKING ALEXANDRIA

THREE RECORDS, A BUNCH OF MOVIES, A NEW COMPANY... WHO'S BEEN A BUSY BOY, THEN?

Q&A

WHEN ALL'S SAID AND DONE, HAS 2017 BEEN A GOOD YEAR FOR YOU, DANNY?

"It's been very positive, especially creatively – I've made three albums! I always knew 2017 was going to be a set-up year for me. It's been a lot of hard work, a lot of long hours, and just generally getting everything ready for what is going to be an incredible 2018! There's been a lot of sacrifice this year, in that I've not been able to go on vacation or take much time to indulge in personal enjoyment. I released an album at the beginning of the year, then I put the Asking Alexandria album together. I've also set up three new movies for next year, and I've written and recorded my next solo album – so it's been a very busy time and, hopefully, it's all going to pay off."

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR FOR YOU?

"December 15, when the new Asking Alexandria album was released!"

AND YOUR LOWEST POINT?

"I got sober this year, but my drinking hit rock bottom before that. Aside from that process, I've been so engulfed in my work that I haven't had time to have a bad year – there just hasn't been an opportunity to get 'down'. There were two tours for [debut solo album] The Long Road Home that I wish I could've done, but the record label I was working with fell through on those, and that was very disappointing. I was wanting to get out to Europe and the UK to tour the record, but because of those problems, that didn't happen. At the end of the day, I blame myself for setting it up with the parties in question who then put me in that position. But it's something I've learnt from, and I'm not going to let it happen again. Overall, though, it's been a great year – I haven't had many low points."

HOW DO YOU REFLECT ON YOUR WORK ON THE NEW AA ALBUM?

"To me, it's an old album [because we recorded it so long ago]. It's aged very well, and that's something I can't apply to all the records I've worked on. I'm a perfectionist: I take my work – especially my studio work – very, very seriously. Usually, by the time I've had a song for a month, I've picked it apart and written a list as long as my arm of things I wish I'd done differently. But with the new Asking Alexandria album, that list is very short. It was the right time for me to be working on an Asking album; I really captured the moment, and everything just fell into place. I'm beyond proud of it – it's the best work I've done, and definitely the best work Asking Alexandria have done. It's a very special record."

> "I DON'T HAVE A PERSONAL VILLAIN. I NEED TO FIND MY NEMESIS!"

AWAY FROM MUSIC, WHAT OTHER PROJECTS HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN THIS YEAR?

"I've set up some great movies for 2018. I can't say too much about them yet, but next year is going to be a big year for me regarding filming, and that's something for which I have a love that I can't describe, so I'm really excited about that. Dsnop Productions has had a great set-up year – we're going to have a lot of stuff coming out in 2018. I opened a company called Rigid & Bent this year, too, where me and my business partner help to find creative opportunities for sculptors, artists and painters. We pair them up with music and musicians, and we're going to start building these big installations around the world to tie in to that. I've got a couple of new recording studios opening next year, as well. Basically, I've spent this year figuring out what's next!"

WHO'S YOUR VILLAIN OF 2017?

"Jameson [Whiskey] – that's been a villain for quite a few years! Isis are pretty bad, too – I hear people don't like them. They're the current villains of the universe. The U.S. President isn't too popular these days, either. I don't have a personal villain, though – I've got to find one! I need a nemesis."

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR CHRISTMAS?

"I've not got any – I'm a grumpy old man, like Scrooge. I hate holidays and happiness, so what I'll probably do is disappear to the cabin for two weeks and come back when all the disgusting cheer is done with. I'll wait for all the good times and bleurgh to be over. I'm currently in the process of buying a new house, and I'll probably spend Christmas furnishing the damn thing. But I will be spoiling my dog, because despite how much I hate holidays, I can't help but involve him in them!"

HAVE YOU GOT A MESSAGE FOR YOUR FANS AHEAD OF THE NEW YEAR?

"Yes – 2018 is going to be a very, very big year. My new solo record is coming, and there will be lots of videos and touring relating to both that and Asking Alexandria. I also have some other musical things in the pipeline, too. AA's plans for the U.S. and the UK are already announced, and it's important to say that we're not touring as much as we used to – we're only doing one world run a year. If people in the UK wanna see a show next year, there's no use in hanging around and hoping we'll announce some more dates for August or whatever, because it's not happening. So grab your tickets now! We want to see you guys and we wanna play for you and show you this new show. I don't want people to miss out because they're holding off and waiting for another tour that isn't happening."

WORDS: JAKE RICHARDSON **PHOTO:** SANJAY GATOR PARIKH

KERRANG!

2017 SHOTS OF THE YEAR

NECK DEEP • BEN BARLOW

PHOTO: ANDY FORD

KERRANG!

2017 SHOTS OF THE YEAR

NIN • TRENT REZNOR

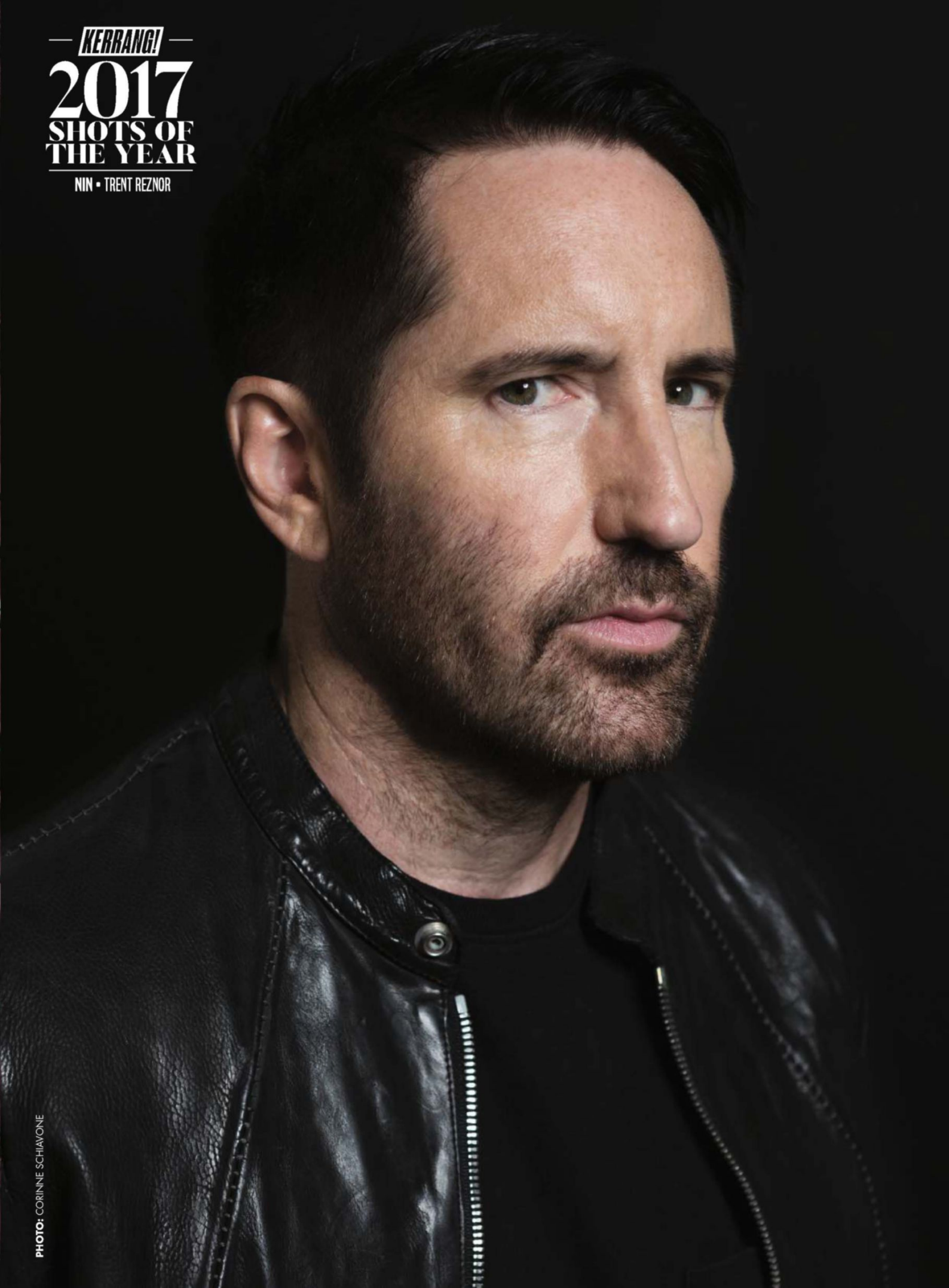


PHOTO: CORINNE SCHIAVONE

KERRANG!

2017 SHOTS OF THE YEAR

METALLICA • JAMES HETFIELD

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

KERRANG!

2017 SHOTS OF THE YEAR

GREEN DAY

PHOTO: LINDSEY BYRNES

KERRANG!

2017 SHOTS OF THE YEAR

PARAMORE • HAYLEY WILLIAMS

PHOTO: GETTY

PHOTO: GRIZZLEE MARTIN

PATRICK STUMP

FALL OUT BOY

HIS ALBUM PLANS MAY NOT HAVE GONE *QUITE* RIGHT, BUT PATRICK'S STILL TAKING 2017'S POSITIVES...

Q&A

AS SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T DUMP THEIR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ON THE INTERNET, HOW HAS YOUR 2017 BEEN?

"Well, it's been a great year to not dump your thoughts and feelings on the internet! I focused on the [Fall Out Boy] record, I focused on my family and I had some projects here and there to keep me busy. That's how I got through it! It hasn't been a banner year, though, has it? It's not exactly been the summer of '69…"

IN A WAY, DOES IT SUM THINGS UP THAT M A N I A ENDED UP BEING DELAYED UNTIL NEXT YEAR?

"Yeah, maybe it's kind of fitting. Maybe it was the most 2017 thing that could happen to us that it had to be put back to 2018."

WHAT WERE THE OTHER PROJECTS YOU MENTIONED?

"I did some film scoring for an animated film [Gnome Alone]. That took me about three or four months. I was working with an orchestra and it was so much fun. I also have a couple of voices in it, but that took me all of one day to do. I did some scoring for Seth Green's live action movie, too. They were both sandwiched either side of the album."

SO ASIDE FROM MUSIC, THIS YEAR HAS LARGELY BEEN ABOUT BEING A FAMILY MAN?

"Yeah, I'm kind of a creature of habit. I really like waking up in the same city every day and doing the basic, little things. It was about reacquainting myself with normalcy. To be completely honest, I'm a pretty mundane guy! That's not necessarily a negative thing. You can ask the guys, you don't see me when I'm off the road, because I'm in bed by 9:30pm every night! Late nights just don't happen when you have kids getting up so early."

> "IT'S IMPORTANT TO SAVOUR THE GOOD THINGS..."

IN THE MIDST OF THAT NORMALCY, HAVE YOU LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT YOURSELF?

"I have, actually. For a long time, I dabbled in a lot of different kinds of art. I tried this and that: I wanted to be an actor, I wanted to be a writer… I think for some reason I felt kind of limited by the idea of Fall Out Boy, or the idea of music – well, pop music – as my only outlet. So for years I liked doing all these different things. But this year I realised that when you wake up in the middle of the night and you're excited by an idea, for me that's a musical or a compositional idea. I've finally come to terms with that, and realised that that's the real me; that's who I am. That realisation has been great, because it's allowed me to trim the fat in my artistic mind and mould it more on the art of music. It's meant that I've really gone to town on working on my sight-reading. I'm 33, I should be able to read by now!"

HAVE YOU TRIED ANYTHING NEW FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR?

"Usually I do try something new and something weird. Scoring was the big thing this time – that was huge. It's weird being an artist and a writer, where I write songs but they're for me to sing, so there's this funny thing where it's a combination of feelings: you write the song, but you have to imagine yourself singing it, because you're the instrument. Scoring was neat because it's really only about the theme, or the character, or whatever the director wants. That was fun and insightful when it came to doing M A N I A after having worked on my first film, because it made it more exciting. Because I had just done a film score, where there was no singing at all, I really went for it on that album. I rediscovered my love for singing."

THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF DOOM AND GLOOM AROUND IN 2017. WHAT'S MADE YOU HOPEFUL THIS YEAR?

"Oh, there were lots of bright spots and reasons for optimism this year, and I think it's important to remember that. There are a lot of really bad things in the world right now, but because they're so prevalent there are too many people pretending there aren't any good things. That's not cool, because they are there and it's important to savour and embrace them. There's no deficiency of bad news. Go to any corner of the internet and there's someone with something horrible to say. Just because that exists doesn't mean the world is suddenly horrible and worthless.

"It feels so cliché to say that being a parent changes you, but it does. I remember the first time my kid had a strawberry. He's a little kid, he takes a bite out of the strawberry, and the look on his face was so incredible. And *of course* it would be. I'm just watching his face, putting this all together in his mind, like, 'What *is* this?!' and I think that is something that really helped me focus this year. Being a parent, when you kind of remember where you were at their age – my son is three now – and I have memories from then. He's in a place where he's going to remember things. I put myself in his shoes. Contextually, when I was his age, the Berlin wall was about to fall, there were all these major world events, some of them terrifying and awful, some of them amazing and interesting. Some of the music was amazing and some of the music was crap. But you're three! You don't know any of this stuff, so everything is new and fascinating to you. That was a really humbling realisation for me this year. It's made me appreciate things in life more."

WORDS: DAVID McLAUGHLIN **PHOTO:** ANDREW LIPOVSKY

REBA MEYERS

CODE ORANGE

SUPPORTING SYSTEM OF A DOWN, PLAYING AT THE WWE, GETTING A GRAMMY NOMINATION... ALL IN A YEAR'S WORK, EH, REBA?

Q&A IT'S BEEN A CRAZY 2017 FOR CODE ORANGE. HOW DOES IT FEEL TO CAP IT WITH THE GRAMMY NOMINATION FOR BEST METAL PERFORMANCE RIGHT AT THE END?

"It's been pretty insane! Safe to say, we were all pretty shocked, but it felt like such a pay-off! [This music] is something that's always made sense to us. But it feels like we've been waiting for other people to realise what we already know. We're aware that those people [behind awards like this] can be pretty dissociated from the real happenings in music – usually they don't know what's good and what's not – but to have been able to reach that far, to have them believe this band of 24-year-old kids from Pittsburgh are worth it, felt pretty good!"

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU ABOUT WINNING IT?

"Who knows. Every time we're presented with a challenge, we'll take it to the fullest to try and make it happen. I know we're the youngest, newest, freshest band on the shortlist. Sure, the other bands on there are all bands I respect. They're all great bands. But if they win, it won't be any kind of statement; it won't surprise the general public. It'll be because it's their turn. There's something different about us. We want to make a statement. We want to shock people. We want to change the way people look at hardcore and metal."

> "THIS IS A BAND OF EXTREME HIGHS AND EXTREME LOWS..."

HAVING COME OUT AT THE START OF THE YEAR, EXPANDED IN THE LIVE ARENA AND ENDED UP ON SO MANY 'BEST OF 2017' LISTS, IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE FOREVER HAS TAKEN ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN...

"We didn't know how people would respond to it. It even took a little while after it came out for us to realise how important a record it'd prove to be for our band. We knew it was special, but we were stuck so tightly into it making and doing it we got lost in the big picture. As the year is ending we're seeing how far it's gone and how many people it's reached. Also, the fact people haven't forgotten about it feels so good. A lot of the time a record can come out in January and then be forgotten about by the end of the year. I think that with the increased attention we've been getting at the end of the year, it might indicate that it took people a while to truly grasp what we were doing."

YOU'VE WORKED AND TOURED RELENTLESSLY. TO WHAT EXTENT DID THAT PLAY A PART?

"We put in a lot of work touring, pushing it and doing things out of our comfort zone. That's definitely helped bring it to people's attention. Everything from touring to the music videos we put out to playing Bleeding In The Blur on WWE. The meaning of the record is that Code Orange is forever. And the response that we've had has been reflective of that. Seeing the people that you'd never think would care about a hardcore band from Pittsburgh putting us on their radar is a sign that this is just gonna keep rolling. We're never gonna stop. We're just gonna keep writing better music and surprising people."

DOES THAT GRAFT OFTEN FEEL LIKE A STRUGGLE?

"We toured from when the record came out in January all the way to mid-July. We're not in a good situation doing that. We're in a van. There are a lot of us. There isn't any money to go around. There's no glamour to that at all. You're not at home, you're away from your family, you're missing every important thing. That just puts a strain on people. You can go crazy in there. But this is a band of extreme highs and extreme lows. This tour we were all cramped into the van, asleep on a 13-hour drive, feeling half-sick. Then at 4am we're woken up to be told we've been nominated for a GRAMMY! We all know that if we're going through a rough patch, it's not the band going downhill: it's the struggle of moving upwards."

YOU'VE CERTAINLY SEEN THE REWARDS. WHAT HAVE BEEN 2017'S HIGHEST POINTS?

"There were a lot that stand out. Supporting System Of A Down was a high point in being able to play in front of that many people. Playing in WWE was like being part of a whole different world. They're all these crazy goals. But there are high points every day when people come to see us and are genuinely shocked to see a band that's young and new and metal, but not just doing exactly the same contrived, old shit. To see other people understanding that instead of just us in our own heads is such a high point."

WHAT'S BEEN THE CRAZIEST MOMENT OF 2017?

"I think the alt-J remixes, and people's reception of them, was a shock. We didn't know how people would react. We didn't know if it'd get lost out there. But it got a lot of reaction from that world. It made us realise that we could maybe even reach these people who'd never even heard a metal band in their life. It was so cool to see this collaboration between artists at polar opposite ends of the spectrum."

WORDS: SAM LAW **PHOTO:** ANGELA OWENS

ANDY BIERSACK

BLACK VEIL BRIDES

ANDY'S DONE A FILM, TOURS AND AN ALBUM, BUT HE STILL HAD TIME TO MOVE HOUSE... IN JUST EIGHT DAYS

Q&A

HOW MUCH OF 2017 WAS ABOUT GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS WITH BLACK VEIL BRIDES?

"From the very beginning of the year, the intention was to shift focus and try to figure out exactly what the next move was. We were in a position where people were living in different states and it was harder to get it all together. It's proven to be a little bit more challenging than it used to be when we'd go, 'Hey, let's do a photoshoot today,' and everyone would just drive to the location. But it's also been a lot of fun getting the band back together."

YOU'VE ALSO BEEN WORKING ON A NEW ANDY BLACK RECORD, RIGHT?

"Yeah, I did the Warped Tour as Andy Black, and I've also been working on the next album. It's been fun to try to balance the two in a way that I haven't before. Up until this year, it was BVB then Andy Black, but now it's a little bit of both. I don't see why it would be a problem, as long as I'm willing to put in the work. It only becomes a problem if you find it too much to handle, but if I'm putting myself out there as someone who can complete these tasks and make a living doing it, I've got to get the work done. I've said before that there are worse problems to have than being really busy when you're basically just an entertainer. If I had to work a job I hate you might have a bit more empathy for me than when I'm talking about scheduling problems on all the cool shit I get to do!"

HOW DID YOU ENJOY STARRING IN THE AMERICAN SATAN FILM?

"Truthfully, it was odd and amazing. It was odd just because it was such a new experience to me, and it was amazing because I was starring in a movie. I got to watch myself on the big screen with my family and friends in a movie theatre. It wasn't just the premiere – my mom and dad went to see it in my hometown and it was a uniquely cool experience. I hope I get to do more acting because I thoroughly enjoyed it."

WAS IT WEIRD WATCHING SOMEONE ELSE'S VOCALS COMING OUT OF YOUR MOUTH?

"It never really occurred to me. I know people made a big deal of it but in my mind I thought of it as, 'Well, I'm not me in this movie, so it doesn't need my singing voice.' I thought it might take away from the movie if I sang, because I have a very specific voice and it would have drawn more attention to the fact that you're watching 'that guy from Black Veil Brides'. I'm not an idiot – I know that a lot of people watching the movie know who I am, but I am supposed to be playing a different rockstar entirely."

> "STARRING IN AMERICAN SATAN WAS BOTH ODD AND AMAZING..."

IF YOU DO PURSUE ACTING WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO A BIT FURTHER OUT THAN PLAYING A ROCKSTAR NEXT TIME?

"Absolutely. When I first came to LA the first thing I did was a bit of acting. That was how I paid the bills. I got a little bit of money doing commercials and the odd TV thing, and that was the way I got my start out here. It's something I put on the backburner, but being able to get back in to it would be a dream."

WHAT'S THE FUNNIEST THING TO HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU THIS YEAR?

"The funniest and strangest was trying to find and move into a new house in about eight days. There was an incident with some people who appeared outside of my house and I just felt like my privacy there was compromised. It was actually the culmination of a number of similar events. Because of going into the studio and having a tour start at the end of the year, the time I had to take care of it meant that I had to have papers signed literally in a week."

WHO'S YOUR HERO OF 2017?

"It's hard for me, because I'm fortunate enough to be around so many incredible people. In terms of music, I could say [producer] John Feldmann or [Warped Tour founder] Kevin Lyman. There's a lot of people that I'm around every day who just inspire me. And then there's my wife, of course. It's hard to pick an individual so I'll go with a global hero that's more conceptual in nature. That's the idea that men, women, people in general appear to be trying to find ways to be more socially conscious. There's something in the air, and I hope that it continues."

AND WHO'S YOUR VILLAIN OF THE YEAR?

"I think there's probably one answer that you'll hear a lot from people. Maybe I won't throw my hat in that ring, just to not sound redundant. That's my answer without answering it!"

THE NEW YEAR SEES THE RELEASE OF THE NEW BLACK VEIL BRIDES ALBUM AND A UK TOUR WITH ASKING ALEXANDRIA – IS THAT A GOOD WAY TO START 2018?

"Yeah, there's a lot of good stuff ahead. It will really be something to not only be back on tour with the band and with our friends in Asking Alexandria, but there will also be the album, and the new Andy Black record at some point. I've also got a book coming out, and I'll be continuing with my weekly podcast [The Andy Show]. There's a lot of stuff that I'm trying my best to fit in."

WHEN DO YOU GET TIME TO REST?

"Every night – I sleep a good eight hours! If you sleep well you can get a lot more done in the day, but I also always try to take Sundays off so that I can watch football and be a little bit more relaxed."

FINALLY, HOW WILL YOU BE SEEING IN THE NEW YEAR?

"I believe we have tentative plans with the Feldmanns – John and his wife Amy. We've celebrated New Year with them before, but I'm not sure exactly where we'll be. John has a bunch of ideas, and I believe the plan is to be on a beach somewhere."

WORDS: PAUL TRAVERS **PHOTO:** PAUL HARRIES

ROU REYNOLDS

ENTER SHIKARI

FOR THE MAN FROM ST ALBANS, 2017 WAS ALL ABOUT POSITIVITY AND STORMING THE CHARTS

Q&A

WHAT WAS THE COMEDOWN FROM HEADLINING ALLY PALLY LIKE?

"It was mostly spent tucked up in bed with a head cold, sadly. It was one of the first times we've played a massive show and had everything go really well. It went off without a hitch, although I did break my mic and my favourite gin glass, which I'm still livid about!"

HOW HAS THE REST OF THIS YEAR BEEN FOR YOU?

"It's been a really good year. Recording The Spark and having it do really well has been so heartwarming. Being able to tour and celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Take To The Skies was a hell of a reminder of how lucky we are to have this career, too. It's been a surreal year."

A BIT OF A CONTRAST TO WHAT WAS A MUCH MORE TESTING EXPERIENCE IN 2016, RIGHT?

"For sure. I'm certainly in a different headspace than this time last year. I've never been one to make resolutions for the year ahead or anything, but last year I definitely made the decision to change my priorities a bit and put more emphasis on self-care than I ever have before. I think that was a really important change to make."

AS A BAND NOTED FOR ALWAYS FORGING FORWARD, DID IT FEEL STRANGE TO STOP TO REFLECT FOR ONCE AT THOSE DEBUT ALBUM ANNIVERSARY SHOWS AT SLAM DUNK IN MAY?

"It was like a celebration. It's amazing to think we've been releasing music for 10 years and to know we're still going from strength to strength. To be able to put everything on pause and look back for a moment was a joy. We'd finished the bulk of the recording for The Spark at the time, so to be able to come away from it and process things for a moment was invaluable. Looking back, it built our confidence even more, reminding us how long we'd been going, seeing how much we'd progressed, and to toast the album that started it all was amazing. I remember feeling anxious about not wanting to overdo the whole anniversary thing. That's why we only did those three Slam Dunks and a little bit of it in America. It was important to feel excited about playing that music again."

"IT'S SURREAL TO SEE YOUR NAME UP THERE WITH ED SHEERAN!"

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT OF 2017?

"Building this album [The Spark] from the ground up. Releasing all the emotions that went into it and to have it be so well received felt awesome."

AND IT ENTERED THE ALBUM CHART AT NUMBER FIVE...

"It's weird, the whole chart thing. Obviously it does represent how many people buy your music, but coming from our background, it's not something we pay too much attention to. If you only pay attention to something for one week of the year when the rest of the time you wouldn't be seen listening to anything from the charts, then I guess that says how much it means. But it's still mega-surreal to see your band name up there with names like Ed Sheeran and The Killers."

WHAT'S BEEN THE HARDEST THING ABOUT YOUR YEAR?

"The most stressful thing was the lead-up to the final tour. We bit off more than we could chew, and the final push before hitting the road was difficult. There was a lot of work and sleep deprivation. When it all came together it was incredible, though."

YOU MENTION SLEEP DEPRIVATION, WHICH WAS A SYMPTOM OF YOUR ILL HEALTH PREVIOUSLY. HAVE THINGS BEEN BETTER IN THAT REGARD THIS YEAR?

"Yeah, definitely. I seem to operate on two levels: if I'm on my normal level of sleep deprivation and anxiety then I recover fairly easily. It's only when too much piles up that I'm not able to get a grip on things anymore. I haven't had any of that this year which is a relief."

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT YOURSELF IN 2017?

"I'm still learning things, but I think the main thing is to step outside of one's immediate thoughts and emotions and to know that they're moments and they're fleeting. When I was going through all that shit last year, it felt eternal, like life was shit and nothing would ever change. But when you come through it, you realise that those extremes have a use-by date and another emotion will be along shortly."

WHAT'D HAVE TO HAPPEN IN 2018 TO TOP THIS YEAR?

"There's a load of touring planned, and I'm going to hopefully try to up my creation levels. I'm starting to write for other people and just write for fun as well. I think that's important to maintain as a consistent thing in my life. I'm really excited about touring again, though."

WORDS: DAVID McLAUGHLIN **PHOTO:** TOM BARNES

BEN BARLOW

NECK DEEP

HOMEGROWN POP-PUNK'S MOST FAMOUS SONS HAD A YEAR TO REMEMBER FOREVER, SAYS BEN...

Q&A

2017 HAS BEEN A PRETTY PHENOMENAL YEAR FOR NECK DEEP – IS IT SAFE TO SAY IT'S BEEN ONE OF THE BEST OF YOUR LIFE?

"Yeah, it's been a hard and stressful year, but with the release of the new album [The Peace And The Panic], how it sold and with all the praise received, it's more than we could have hoped for. It's been the best year for the band so far; we played some *insane* shows that we had set as goals for ourselves years ago, and to have achieved them is amazing."

HOW DID IT FEEL HAVING SUCH A RUN OF WINS WHEN THE PEACE AND THE PANIC CAME OUT?

"It was wild. Your biggest concern when you put out a new record is, 'Are people going to like it? We know *we* love it, but is this going to be well received?' Getting the good reviews we did was a massive weight off our shoulders; you feel like you've done your job – and at least have a couple more years of getting to do what you love before it all potentially goes wrong (*laughs*)! It was good to know that people believed in what we were doing, and got what we were going for, and we definitely feel that all the stress around making the record paid off."

> "THE STRESS OF MAKING THE RECORD DEFINITELY PAID OFF"

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WERE THE LOW POINTS OF 2017?

"I really don't think there were too many. It was just typical stress and anxiety, and the difficulty that comes from being away from home a lot. Really, anything bad was us just being moany little bastards: 'Oh no, I've got to get up *earlier* than *midday* so I can fly to *Australia*? Oh, woe is me!' If that's as bad as it gets, you know you've had a pretty good year!"

WARPED TOUR WAS ALSO HUGE FOR NECK DEEP. WHAT WERE THE HIGHLIGHTS FOR YOU?

"It's always such a blur that ultimately merges into one giant car park, but this year was definitely the best yet. I think it's probably the day we played in Chicago that really stands out. It was one of the bigger dates and it was also both mine and Sam [Bowden, guitar]'s birthday and there were a lot of good vibes. We tried to get nice and wasted, but it was an early bus call and a giant drive, which doesn't help! Instead of a birthday cake I had a giant Lou Malnati's deep dish pizza, and that was great!"

WHAT WERE THE BEST SHOWS YOU PLAYED?

"Hands down Brixton Academy and Manchester Apollo. Those were the true *moments* of the year, they were genuine bucket list items we'd had for years, and for that to have happened is amazing. We'd been visualising them for a long time, as something we *might* get to do, and I can honestly say I've burned them thoroughly into my mind, and I'll never forget how amazing they were."

AWAY FROM THE STAGE, WHAT WAS THE MOST 'OH MY GOD' MOMENT FOR YOU?

"Just Trump being in power was one long one. I think there's been a lot of 'What the fuck?' moments in politics this year, and within the general culture, and it's hard not to see the big divide between people that seems to have spread around the world, based on their political views. I feel that almost the zeitgeist of the year is the way things have factionalised, and the attitude of, 'If you don't think like me, you're a c**t.' Seeing the rise of that mentality and the way it crept into everyday life definitely made me say, 'What the fuck?' a lot."

DID YOU MEET ANY OF YOUR HEROES?

"Yes, I got to meet Corey Taylor again, which was a cool one, but the big one for me was Bam Margera on Warped Tour. He came and hung out on our bus and we just had a chat for 20 or 30 minutes, and that was awesome."

WHAT WERE YOUR FAVOURITE RECORDS OF 2017?

"I'm probably missing some really fucking obvious ones, but off the top of my head, the WSTR record [Red, Green Or Inbetween] is great, and Knuckle Puck [Shapeshifter] and Turnover's [Good Nature], too. I'd recommend all of those."

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE YOU VISITED FOR THE FIRST TIME?

"We only played a few new ones to us, and of them Copenhagen was a really cool place. The people there were strange, but in a good way, and we had a great time while we were there! It was mostly a lot of the same places, and a lot of them it was to more people than the last time we were there, but in 2018 we really will be going to a lot of places we've never played before."

WHAT WAS THE BEST THING YOU READ ABOUT YOURSELF ONLINE?

"People complaining about the cost of VIP packages is always quite a good one, because it always brings out the 'music industry expert', who thinks we're pocketing all the money charged for them. What they don't realise is how *expensive* it is to tour – and had we not done the VIP packages we wouldn't have been able to put on a show half as good as the one we toured the UK with toward the end of the year. Anyone thinking we're lining our pockets out of that shit has got another thing coming, because we are the *last* ones to make money off the band!"

WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING FOR CHRISTMAS?

"For the first time we'll be spending it at my sister's; she's just moved into a nice new house, which they've been renovating. Traditionally, we either do it at our house or my mum's best friend's, but the torch has finally been passed onto my sister. We're all going to be staying there for a couple of days and doing all the standard Christmassy shit you want to do when it comes around!"

WORDS: DAN SLESSOR **PHOTO:** TOM BARNES

JENNA McDOUGALL

TONIGHT ALIVE

JENNA'S WORLD HAS TURNED ON ITS HEAD THE PAST 12 MONTHS – AND ALL FOR THE BETTER...

Q&A

HOW WOULD YOU SUM UP 2017?

"It's been an extremely transformational time. It contains the most active work I've done on myself, and it was a year where I feel I've written and created my best work on the new album [Underworld, out on January 12]. Seriously, it feels like I've been on a tidal wave the whole year – a lot of highs and lows – but I feel pretty centred at this point in time, so it's nice to be closing the year on that note."

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR PERSONAL HIGHLIGHT?

"Regaining my health after finishing the record has been such a liberating experience [Jenna has long suffered from eczema]. I have so much more energy, and I wear clothes where I'm no longer trying to hide my skin and my body. That's had such a reflection in my mind and in my social behaviour and things like that. I feel like I'm a representation of my inner-self finally, and my body's not restricting me anymore."

WHERE DID YOU BEGIN 2017?

"I was in New Zealand. New Year's Eve was the first time I'd drank alcohol in a really long time, and I got drunk off three shots of tequila. I regretted it so much and felt hungover within hours. I was on a family holiday, on a cruise. The next day we were in Fiordland, a national park. It was gorgeous; there were lush mountains and waterfalls. There was a real pure vibe to that day. It was on that trip that I wrote the verses to Last Light, which is a tribute to a friend of mine who took his life. I was experiencing that grief, but there was so much beauty in the world around me that I could feel his essence in that; in the song, I'm referencing the things I saw on New Year's Day."

WHICH BOOK HAS HAD THE MOST PROFOUND EFFECT ON YOU DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

"I'm just looking at my bookshelf. There's a book called Beyond Birth And Death by [A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami] Prabhupada, who's the leader and founder of the Hare Krishna Movement. He talks about speaking the truth and the nature of humans and the material world. It's a book that put a lot into perspective for me. I felt really inspired by reading it."

HOW WAS YOUR UK TOUR WITH YOU ME AT SIX?

"That was a fun run. There's a great energy between our two bands, and they're great guys. They all have their own personalities, but there's a high spiritual energy and a real openness. We've known each other since Warped several years ago and we've toured Australia together, too. It was so great to tour the UK together, because it's my favourite place to play."

YOU VISITED ARMENIA IN APRIL. WHAT WAS THAT EXPERIENCE LIKE?

"A lot of my Australian family went out there after the You Me At Six tour and I met some of my Armenian family, too. We got these apartments together and it was an amazing shared space. My mum basically booked a tour bus and we'd all go out and see monasteries, historical sites and the countryside. It was the first time I'd ever been there. I learned a lot about my family and my culture, directly from the source. It was really cool, and really emotional at times as well."

"I FINALLY FEEL LIKE MY BODY ISN'T RESTRICTING ME ANYMORE"

YOU PLAYED YOUR LAST SHOW OF 2017 ON NOVEMBER 10 IN MELBOURNE. WAS IT A GOOD WAY TO SIGN OFF FOR THE YEAR?

"We're not from Melbourne, obviously, but everyone seems to hold the Corner Hotel and selling it out in high esteem, so it was a really cool thing to do. It was almost twice the size of the Sydney show and our relationship with the fans and the music scene there is so strong. I got sick and lost my voice so I was stressed out before the show, drinking a lot of hot water. I didn't want to let anyone down so I took the warm-up really slow. We had Marcus [Bridge] from Northlane join us on The Edge, and the show was really special."

WHAT DO YOU WISH FOR IN 2018?

"That's a big question. I feel like I don't have to wish for anything, because I know what's coming; every day that I'm on the road, I'm living my purpose and don't have to ask for that to happen. The natural reaction to me giving myself onstage is to feel totally fulfilled and to feel that I'm providing something that I've always needed for myself, when people respond to that, it's like a full-circle, life-enhancing experience. I just really look forward to being in the flow with my guys. I think it's going to be an amazing year."

WORDS: SIMON YOUNG

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFO *CHRISTMA*

…AND ALL ROUND THE PUB, ROCKSTARS WERE BOOZING, AND HAVING SOME GRUB. WHY, IT'S THE ANNUAL **KERRANG! CHRISTMAS DINNER**! AND THIS YEAR, THANKFULLY, NO-ONE'S ENDING UP IN HOSPITAL…

ORE
S...

Our Brit-rock supergroup's rider requests were… unusual

Becca Macintyre is ordering a Coca-Cola at the bar. She clocks K!'s look of surprise and offers an explanation by way of a cautionary tale about the potential perils of our annual Christmas party, a celebration of the people that rocked in that respective year. Back in 2015, the Marmozets singer broke bread (and various other items) with the likes of Enter Shikari's Rou Reynolds, Neck Deep's Ben Barlow, and Fightstar's Charlie Simpson – the latter of whom put the cat among the pigeons by setting a book on fire, which almost resulted in everyone being thrown out. Turns out that might have been helpful for Becca.

"I was probably not in the best place," she recalls of that occasion. "I drank shitloads of wine, which was probably not a good idea to begin with." She goes on to explain how While She Sleeps frontman Loz Taylor, also in attendance that day, later offered her what we'll call 'special incense', and things quickly deteriorated. "Our tour manager at the time drove us out of London and I projectile vomited in his car. He didn't know what to do, so he took me to the hospital. My mum turned up and bollocked me so much. I remember that Loz was in a Jesus pose in the picture [accompanying the article], and I was stood there like an angel. He was far from Jesus that day, and I was *far* from an angel!"

Much has changed since then, with Becca describing the past 12 months in which she's had multiple knee surgeries and made Marmozets' second album, Knowing What You Know Now, as "chaotically peaceful".

"I've had a weird awakening from myself – I'm so

WORDS: JAMES HICKIE **PHOTOS:** ANDY FORD

much more chilled now, and it can take a lifetime for people to get to that point, especially in this industry."

Luckily for Becca, Loz isn't here today, replaced instead by nine fellow British musicians – six of them Kerrang! cover stars in 2017 – that have enjoyed a similarly productive year with their own bands (and in one case, solo venture) while collectively hoisting the flag of the UK scene ever higher. There's Josh Franceschi and Max Helyer from You Me At Six, who released their fifth album Night People in January and were on the cover of K! in March, with whom Becca has bonded over the years thanks to a mutual love of each other's bands. The duo are accompanied by the singer's dog Harley in tow, but Max's focus is clearly elsewhere. He spots K! Editor Sam Coare on his mobile phone nearby.

"Is that Mr. Moët calling?" the guitarist shouts.

"Yeah, where's the champagne at?!" chimes Josh.

Sam McTrusty is similarly enthusiastic about the idea. The Twin Atlantic singer/guitarist knows the YMAS boys from countless shows together, and himself graced the cover of K! in April, though didn't unveil the arm tattoo that's faintly visible through his white jumper. It appears to say 'B.O.T.F.'

"What does it stand for?" asks Josh.

"'Back On The Fags,'" replies Sam.

And are you?

"I've never, ever smoked," he laughs. Turns out it *actually* stands for 'Boys On Tour Forever', which Sam reveals also adorns the skin of The Xcerts drummer Tom Heron (sadly, not in attendance today).

"Coca-Cola! Holidays are coming, motherfuckers!" yells Jamie Lenman upon spotting Becca's beverage of choice. The former Reuben man, who released his second solo album Devolver in October, is the only person you could say has truly dressed for the occasion, decked in his trademark three-piece suit. Despite his manic energy, however, he's a long-time teetotaller. He also appears to have a connection to the vast majority of the others here, one way or another.

Boston Manor singer Henry Cox, for example, directed the video for Jamie's single Mississippi earlier this year. The two embrace while singing each other's praises.

"He reminds me of a younger me, except much better," beams Jamie. "Working with him on Mississippi was great – he pulled out all the stops. I was only expecting something simple, and before I knew it he'd found a bunch of pheasants and hired a pony."

"I dragged him up to Lancashire on a very cold day, for which I'm very sorry," laughs Henry. When not leading Boston Manor through a successful stint on Warped Tour, or the band's first-ever U.S. headline shows, Henry also found time to direct the promo for the Blood Youth track What I'm Running From. Their frontman Kaya Tarsus is here, and quick to tell us about his highlight from this year: supporting Prophets Of Rage at a 6,000-capacity arena in Germany.

"After we played, [PoR guitar hero] Tom Morello came up to me and put his hand on my shoulder and said, 'How's it going, brother?' I've never been starstruck before that," recalls Kaya.

Jamie also knows Justine Jones, having handpicked Employed To Serve to appear at his one-day Lenmania festival last month, with the vocalist jumping onstage to join him for the song The Fuck Of It All.

"It was really good, but I got a bit of stage fright when I saw 500-odd people staring up at me," reveals Justine. She's over the moon that her band's most recent album, The Warmth Of A Dying Sun, has been voted Number One in K!'s Albums Of The Year

MY CHRISTMAS...
JUSTINE JONES

A NON-FESTIVE ALBUM THAT REMINDS ME OF CHRISTMAS...
"Slipknot's self-titled album, because I got into it around that time of year."

CHRISTMAS TELLY OF CHOICE...
"Toy Story. We're a big fan of Pixar in my household."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FILM...
"Home Alone. I always fantasised that I'd be left in my house, and wondered what I'd do."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FOOD...
"I'm boring, because I really like the trimmings: all the vegetables, drowned in gravy."

IDEAL STOCKING FILLER...
"Socks, because when you go away for 20 days on tour, you realise how few of them you have."

Alright, Josh, we've all had a drink...

On our signal, unleash hell/terrible jokes

Henry was staunchly defensive of his hat

MY CHRISTMAS...
JOSH FRANCESCHI

WORST THING ABOUT XMAS...
"When I used to go home for Christmas in Weybridge, and be around people from my old school who still sucked."

BEST PRESENT EVER...
"From an early age, it wasn't about the gifts, but about being around the important people."

A NON-FESTIVE ALBUM THAT REMINDS ME OF CHRISTMAS...
"Make Yourself by Incubus. I got a portable CD player, and my parents got me that album. All I wanted to do was listen to it."

IDEAL STOCKING FILLER...
"A certificate of shareholding in Arsenal FC, which I just got from the club."

CHRISTMAS DRINK OF CHOICE...
"Sloe gin, because you can put it in a little flask, go out with the dogs, and get off your nut."

Becca had devised a novel way of delivering presents

"Is it... a box?"

"THIS YEAR HAS BEEN A LEARNING EXPERIENCE"
JOSH FRANCESCHI

rundown, and similarly thrilled to be reunited with Milk Teeth's Becky Blomfield. Their bands toured together this summer, and they've remained fast friends since.

"It's so good to be back together, it's like no time has passed," smiles Becky. She sympathises with the staff busily rushing around us, as she still has a day job in a coffee shop, despite her band currently being on a "really fun" tour with pop-punk giants Good Charlotte, playing in front of crowds she affectionately describes as "old-school greebos".

As if on cue, Will Gould arrives. Creeper's frontman, like Becca, was here in 2015, his lateness today down to the fact he's been moving house in his native Southampton, and making last-minute preparations for the band's Theatre Of Fear shows.

"I hope you guys haven't been waiting for me to eat, because I had a vegan meal on the train up," Will apologetically tells the group. Everybody else, noticeably famished, heads for the table.

"Come on everyone, let's have some munch," booms born party-starter Max. As if anyone here needs encouragement...

Despite there being many moments of frivolity – Becca revealing an as-yet-untapped talent for balancing Christmas presents on her head ("It's a gift"); Jamie completing his Bond villain look with an eye patch from one of the crackers ("I may wear this permanently"); Justine gamely reading out the frankly terrible jokes from said crackers ("They're all *awful*") – there's a more serious tone to this year's gathering compared with others.

Perhaps, as illustrated by Becca's earlier admission, it's down to the fact that many of those here are a little older and wiser than they used to be, and with that more aware that to succeed in their chosen field, you've got to recognise it as a marathon rather than a sprint. Or maybe it's down to the changing nature, and responsibilities, of what it means to in a band. Whatever the reason(s), amidst the customary war stories and tales of debauchery from life on the road, a number of more thoughtful themes appear throughout proceedings.

For some, it's dealing with the frustrations with the year that's just gone, many of which are to do with the business of making music, and the lessons they'll be carrying into 2018.

"Everything about the Night People cycle felt difficult," says Josh of a year in which You Me At Six parted ways with their management company on the week their album was released, and later their record label. "It's been a learning experience. We've learned to understand that shit happens, and you can either get sucked into a negative headspace about it, or you can crack on. The main highlight, then, has been our drive to move forward, creatively. We're in the midst of writing a new record."

"I'm an optimist," adds Max, who's positive about having headlined the second stage at this year's Reading & Leeds festivals, but less so about some aspects of Night People ("Is it a great record? Maybe not"). "We've been busy, but I'd like to have been busier. We're still here and we're still playing shows all over the world, so it's been good, but I always want *more*. We want the next album to surprise people. We've written a song that's like Nirvana-meets-Radiohead."

"I like the sound of that," enthuses Sam, who seems similarly disillusioned with some of the inflexible traditional practices of the music industry. He and bandmate Ross McNae have built their own studio in Glasgow, where they've been writing and producing a track a week since April. "It's been a liberating year, where we've stood on our own two feet as a band once and

MY CHRISTMAS...
SAM McTRUSTY

WORST CRACKER JOKE...
"I try my best to forget them. The older you get, the less you can do dad jokes."

YOUR BEST CHRISTMAS EVER...
"When I got my first guitar, when I was 18."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FILM...
"I like The Grinch, because I'm a massive Jim Carrey fan."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS SONG...
"Bing Crosby's White Christmas. You can't fuck with a classic."

IDEAL STOCKING FILLER...
"Some sort of fruit-based confectionary, I don't care which."

MY CHRISTMAS...
MAX HELYER

BEST CHRISTMAS MEMORY...
"Any involving family, especially those who have passed on."

A NON-FESTIVE ALBUM THAT REMINDS ME OF CHRISTMAS...
"In Rainbows by Radiohead, because it's a *cold*-sounding album."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS DRINK...
"Prosecco, a shot of Amaretto, and a splash of Chambord."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS SONG...
"The Christmas Song by Nat King Cole."

WORST THING ABOUT XMAS...
"The Christmas sales – I *hate* them!"

for all. We've probably got a few records that we could release, but we only want to put something out there that will have a *real impact* on music."

On the other side of the table, as well as trying to eat in spite of talk turning to Harley the dog having some, er, arse problems, the focus is on the continued need for social inspiration, rather than creative liberation, within the UK scene. Becky highlights the fact that she and Justine shared the cover of K! in August as a positive example.

"To have two women do that, especially in the genres of music that we make, felt really groundbreaking," she states. "The bands are so different, so to get to celebrate that diversity was amazing."

"It blew my mind," agrees Justine of an achievement she'd previously thought "too crazy" to add to her bucket list. "We want to keep pushing and make a difference."

This includes her wish to start a "Surrey Hate Crew" with Jamie and the You Me At Six boys. "It's basically the nicest county in the UK, so we could club together to make it tougher."

"For years and years the UK rock scene has been a platform of young males to aspire to, and I don't know if that's always necessarily been a good thing," says Will. You can forgive him for being a little fatigued, as he's currently in the home straight of a year in which his band released their 5K-rated full-length debut, Eternity, In Your Arms, played progressively bigger UK venues, spent the summer on Warped Tour, *and* been on the cover of K! not once, but twice. The first time, in March, was in his own right, the second alongside Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn ("A surreal experience").

"To have bands like Employed To Serve and Milk Teeth coming to prominence is incredibly important," he continues. "Similarly, having Hannah [Greenwood, keyboardist and singer] in our band is also important, because young women should be able to feel that they can aspire to do what they see people like them onstage doing."

Will pauses to mention that he and Hannah duet on a cover of the sozzled Pogues and Kirsty MacColl classic Fairytale Of New York, which features on the band's Christmas EP.

"The whole idea of Creeper, is for people to see us and think, 'Well, what can I do?'" he continues. "To see Hannah onstage being this incredible pianist and vocalist, or Becky and Justine up there rocking out, will hopefully result in more young women stepping up to be involved."

And with that, Becky, Justine and Becca proudly clink glasses.

Upon toasting one another's health, talk naturally turns to what health our 10 revellers think the UK scene is in, leading to some lively debate – because, let's face it, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without one.

At 35, Jamie is the oldest person here, playfully dubbing himself "granddad" and wondering aloud how many Christmases he has left. Having been at the forefront of a UK movement fronting Reuben between 1998 and 2008, he's well placed to evaluate where we are now in comparison. As a little side note, Sam earlier confided to K! that Twin Atlantic often had the Reuben song No One Wins The War played over the PA before their shows, and is therefore a little nervous to meet the man responsible ("I can't – I'll be a massive fanboy!")

"I think it's in a great place," says Jamie of the state of things, now wholly unintimidating having removed his eye patch and left with a deep ridge around his head. "I've been able to book two tours, both with three or four support bands that I really liked, and then Lenmania with all British acts, including Employed To Serve, Palm Reader and Fizzy Blood; the amount of incredible albums I've had sent my way this year makes me feel chuffed to be a part of it all."

"I'd say it's never been stronger," adds Henry, upping the stakes. He reveals his favourite Christmas tradition is to go to a Wetherspoons in his native Blackpool and drunkenly throw a friend into its Christmas tree. He eyes the one in the corner of the London function room we're in and smiles at K!. We back away cautiously.

"This is just a fraction of the awesome bands we have," he continues, returning to less mischievous matters. "I don't think there's really been a better time, especially with regards to a global scene, because so many people are paying attention. That's because there are so many great British bands consistently touring and releasing great records, which I don't think has happened in this way since the early 2000s."

"That's because there's such a broad spectrum of genres to celebrate," suggests Becky. "There was a cookie-cutter approach to the rock scene for a while, but all the people here are doing their own thing, which is really refreshing, and the rest of the world is taking note. We spoke to Good Charlotte, an American band, and they're aware of how much bands are killing it over here."

MY CHRISTMAS... JAMIE LENMAN

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FILM...
"Scrooged, because Bill Murray."

BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT I'VE EVER RECEIVED...
"A really nice red and black scarf my wife knitted me one year."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS SONG...
"Anything off the Chas & Dave's Christmas album [Chas & Dave's Christmas Carol Album]."

A NON-FESTIVE ALBUM THAT REMINDS ME OF CHRISTMAS...
"Get Some by Snot, because my parents got it for me one year, after I begged them."

CHRISTMAS DRINK OF CHOICE...
"It can only be Coca-Cola."

Justine didn't even know it was Christmas when she turned up like this

"Listen, mate, one more bad word about Brussels sprouts and we're taking this outside..."

MY CHRISTMAS... HENRY COX

WORST CRACKER JOKE...
"'What happens when an astronaut gets mad? He blasts off.' *Rubbish*!"

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FOOD...
"Those cheese twirl things you get from Sainsbury's."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS DRINK...
"Hot toddy."

IDEAL STOCKING FILLER...
"Underpants, or a Terry's Chocolate Orange."

BEST PRESENT EVER RECEIVED...
"A rare Black Flag seven-inch my mate once got me."

WORST THING ABOUT XMAS...
"The stressful build-up."

"THE MACINTYRE XMAS CAN BE CARNAGE!"

BECCA MACINTYRE

MY CHRISTMAS... KAYA TARSUS

BEST CHRISTMAS MEMORY...
"Just being young and excited, and not being an adult and having bills to pay."

WORST THING ABOUT XMAS...
"It sucks that there's only one special day for the whole family to be together."

BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT I'VE EVER RECEIVED...
"When I was 11, I got a PS2 and was so happy because I'd never had a console before."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS SONG...
"X-M@$ by Corey Taylor."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FOOD...
"If you can veganise a mash for me, I'll definitely have it."

MY CHRISTMAS... BECCA MACINTYRE

IDEAL STOCKING FILLER...
"Bath bombs, or scented candles."

BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT I'VE EVER RECEIVED...
"My dad got me a mobile phone. It was ringing from inside the bag he'd given me."

A NON-FESTIVE ALBUM THAT REMINDS ME OF CHRISTMAS...
"Lust For Life by Iggy Pop. The title-track sounds like sleigh bells to me."

CHRISTMAS DRINK OF CHOICE...
"A nice red wine. Actually, mulled wine – how could I forget that?!"

CHRISTMAS TELLY OF CHOICE...
"Home Alone is always good to fall asleep to after too much food."

Jamie passes down some wisdom about Xmas day eating

Max reveals the cracker gift that is going to shape YMAS' next record

Max, who's returned from a chilly trip to the terrace outside for a "blem" (translation: a cigarette) is playing devil's advocate – and not just by diligently keeping everyone's glasses topped up.

"Dare I say, I think rock has taken a bit of a hit this year," he suggests, "unless you're a massive band like Guns N' Roses coming back, or Black Sabbath playing your final tour. Modern rock bands have to move with the times."

"I feel the gap between the 'legacy' headliners and the up-and-coming bands is starting to close," offers Justine. "That hunger is there."

Josh agrees with his bandmate.

"I look around this table, and what's happening in the UK, and it's clearly a more thriving scene than we've had in a long time," says Josh, before returning to an argument he outlined in K!'s cover feature with the band in March. "Rock, on the whole, is light years behind other genres in the way we produce and put out music. We want to learn from that, and we're going to continuously put stuff out next year in the form of standalone singles and mixtapes, looking at the blueprint that's been laid down by hip-hop artists." Despite Josh's desire to learn from non-rock sources, he reveals Nothing But Thieves' second album Broken Machine is his favourite release of 2017.

"We've had to sit on our album for a year, because of the way things are done," says Becca of Knowing What You Know Now, having finally allowed herself some wine. "I'd give it to people for free tomorrow if I could," she laughs, "but that's because of the kind of person I am!"

Sam, meanwhile, says he struggles to make an evaluation, given that his relationship with music has changed.

"I've only been to about three gigs this year," he admits. "I don't enjoy music in the same way that I used to now that I have a songwriter's brain. Having said that, another reason it's hard to say is that it's so hard to keep up because there are so many new bands, which suggests we're in very healthy place. For some bands, it's not about thriving, it's just about surviving."

"That's what defines bands now," says Will, "that spirit of doing it because you love it, because we're not necessarily making money from this. We're losing money doing our Theatre Of Fear tour, because we've put so much into making it as good as possible. My girlfriend always says to me, 'When's your annual leave?' but the nature of what we do for a living is to be on call. My mum was a midwife, so when I was a kid she'd be on call all Christmas, which I never understood, but now I do."

As bills are settled, coats are gathered and farewells are bid, our revellers return to the topic of the very occasion we're here celebrating.

For Kaya, any opportunities to enjoy the festivities will be limited, because on the morning of Christmas Day he's heading off on tour with Bury Tomorrow and Caliban.

"When everyone is getting up and opening their presents, I'll be in the van, but that's the life I've chosen," he laughs.

For everyone else, it's all about spending special time with loved ones, and the welcome opportunity to step away from their musical mantles.

"It's nice to get to not be the dude from the band, but to be my mother and father's son, and your girlfriend's parents' kind-of son-in-law," laughs Will.

"This has been the perfect practice for a Macintyre Christmas," says Becca, who we started proceedings with, so it makes sense to end on, especially as she's about to jump on a train to Nottingham. "We usually have about 15 around the table, which is lovely, but it can be *carnage*. Bring it on!"

MY CHRISTMAS... BECKY BLOMFIELD

IDEAL STOCKING FILLER...
"Shampoo, as you always need to stock up on it for tour."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FILM...
"I like children's TV, so it would probably be The Snowman."

BEST PRESENT EVER...
"My boyfriend has already given me my present, which is a climbing harness and shoes, which doesn't sound glamorous, but I started rock climbing, so I'm stoked."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FOOD...
"Pigs in blankets. Bread sauce is also great – it's the cloves that make it special."

CHRISTMAS DRINK OF CHOICE...
"A vodka and cranberry, as cranberry is Christmassy. Or a Baileys hot chocolate."

MY CHRISTMAS... WILL GOULD

FAVOURITE XMAS MEMORY...
"My dad used to dress up as Father Christmas, so coming downstairs and seeing him."

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FILM...
"Miracle On 34th Street – the remake, not the original."

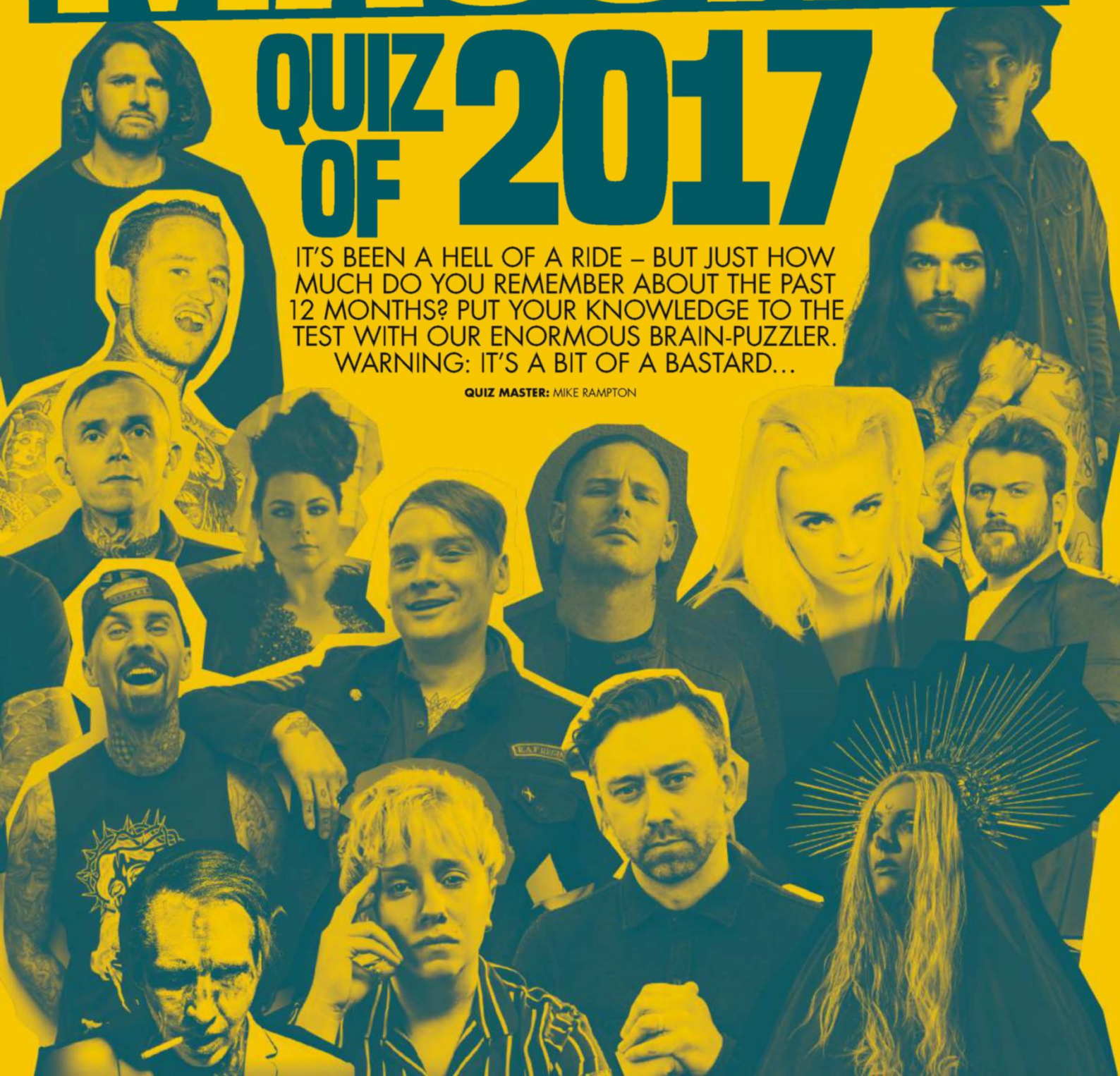
FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS DRINK...
"Gin and tonic with half a lemon, which I drink all year around."

A NON-FESTIVE ALBUM THAT REMINDS ME OF CHRISTMAS...
"The first Soulfly album. My dad – the coolest in the world – bought me that and a wristband to wear at Ozzfest."

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION...
"To trust my instincts more."

"EVERY BAND HERE IS DOING THEIR OWN THING – AND THE WORLD IS TAKING NOTE"
BECKY BLOMFIELD

KERRANG!'S BLOODY MASSIVE QUIZ OF 2017



IT'S BEEN A HELL OF A RIDE – BUT JUST HOW MUCH DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE PAST 12 MONTHS? PUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO THE TEST WITH OUR ENORMOUS BRAIN-PUZZLER. WARNING: IT'S A BIT OF A BASTARD...

QUIZ MASTER: MIKE RAMPTON

1 Justine, Richard, Jamie, Sammy and Robbie are the members of which band, who made their K! cover debut this year?

2 The Amity Affliction headlined 2017's Kerrang! Tour, but what spot did their latest album reach in the Australian charts?

3 All Time Low released their seventh album this year. What's it called?

4 Foo Fighters' 2017 album Concrete And Gold featured guest drums from which knight of the realm?

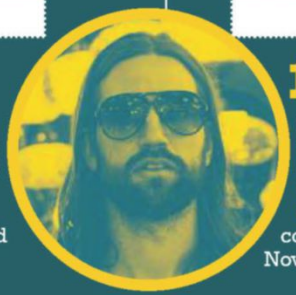
5 What stage did Neck Deep headline at Reading & Leeds this year?

6 Complete this lyric from Paramore's 2017 single Hard Times: '*Tell my friends / I'm coming down / We'll kick it / When I* _____'

7 Which former member of My Chemical Romance brought out the EP Keep The Coffins Coming this year?

8 The abbreviation AWKOHAWNOH means most to fans of what band?

9 Metallica broke the all-time attendance record for which London venue twice this past year?



10 Who played their first-ever shows in El Salvador, Lithuania and China as part of a 36-country tour ending in July this year?

11 What iconic hit did Slayer perform on The Tonight Show in July?

12 Broken Machine, the second album by Nothing But Thieves, did really well in the charts when it was released in September. But at what position did it peak?

13 Of what band did Sylosis frontman Josh Middleton also become a full-time member this year?

14 What was unusual about Biffy Clyro's opening act at the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire in February?

15 In Every Time I Die's Map Change, with whom is the ship going down?

16 Where would Creeper like to spend eternity?

17 According to the title of their latest greatest hits compilation, released this past November, Green Day are the favourite band of who?

18 Forever marked the major-label debut of which Pennsylvania hardcore band (and 2017 K! cover stars)?

19 Which regal London venue played host to Enter Shikari, Royal Blood and Don Broco this year?

20 Weezer released Pacific Daydream this year. True or false: this brings their album total to a nice round 10?

21 Which band, hailing from the Yorkshire town of Bingley and sporting two surnames between five members, announced that they will be releasing their long-awaited second album in January?

22 Which rockstar read a children's tale – Zog, by Julia Donaldson – on CBeebies' Bedtime Stories this year?

23 Which band managed to support Metallica, Guns N' Roses, Red Hot Chili Peppers *and* Korn on different tours this year?

24 Nine Inch Nails made an appearance as themselves in which weird-as-hell revived TV show?

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

THE PHOTO ON THE RIGHT CONTAINS 10 DIFFERENCES TO THE ORIGINAL ON THE LEFT. SPOT THEM ALL AND GIVE YOURSELF A PAT ON THE BACK

PHOTO: CHRIS CASEY

WHO THE HELL?

25 Which controversial rockstar was hospitalised after an accident involving stage props shaped like giant guns?

26 Against Me!'s Laura Jane Grace performed the theme tune to what Adult Swim cartoon this year?

27 Before releasing Material Control in December, how long had it been since Glassjaw put an album out?

28 Who are Mike, Ben, Eddy and Dec better known as?

29 Waterparks' second album was this year announced for a January 2018 release. What's it called?

30 This Song Is Dumb & So Am I is the subtitle of a track on whose 4K-rated 2017 album Hydrograd?

31 Black Sabbath played their final-ever show in which city this February?

32 Brendon Urie and Oli Sykes ventured into the pop world and made cameo appearances in which Charli XCX video?

UNJUMBLE THESE BAND NAME ANAGRAMS. GET A POINT FOR EACH ANSWER. EASY... RIGHT?

OCRE CANOED

VERY DEEPEST LOOM

THE SHUTTING BOVINE

BYE MERE MATADOR

ID MET EERIE IVY

LINK SPOT

TEAM LILAC

HOT VIGILANTE

CAU' SENSORS

SNITCHED TAPIOCA!

33 Becky Blomfield is the lead singer of which punk band?

34 The new vegan straight-edge hardcore band SECT XVX features Andy Hurley on drums, best known for being in what band?

35 Mastodon's Brann Dailor, Bill Kelliher and Brent Hinds appeared in the season finale of what TV show?

36 Burst & Decay is an acoustic EP released in 2017 by which pop-punk giants?

37 Complete the title of Xcerts' upcoming fourth album: Hold On To Your _____

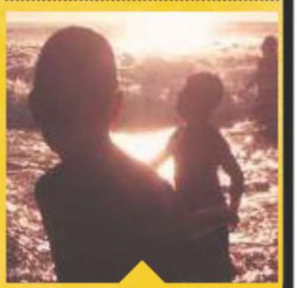
38 Snake Eyes, Acid Veins and Neon Rust are tracks from which punk band's sophomore album, released in January?

39 Deaf Havana's James and Matthew share what surname?

40 The Darkness had all their equipment nicked in Italy, and subsequently found in which European country?

THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL

ALL OF THESE ALBUMS APPEARED IN OUR 50 ALBUMS OF THE YEAR COUNTDOWN LAST ISSUE – BUT CAN YOU IDENTIFY THEM BY THEIR SLEEVES?



UP SHIRT CREEK

OUR OFFICE WASHING MACHINE HAS SCUFFED THE NAMES OFF THESE SHIRTS. HELP US FIGURE OUT WHICH BAND EACH SHIRT BELONGS TO, WOULD YOU?

....

41 2017 marked the final shows from The Dillinger Escape Plan, but when did they form?

42 June saw Guns N' Roses play their first UK show with the Axl-Duff-Slash line-up in how many years?

43 Aaron Pauley became the lead singer of which Californian metalcore outfit this year?

44 What track from Avenged Sevenfold's The Stage has been nominated for the Best Rock Song GRAMMY?

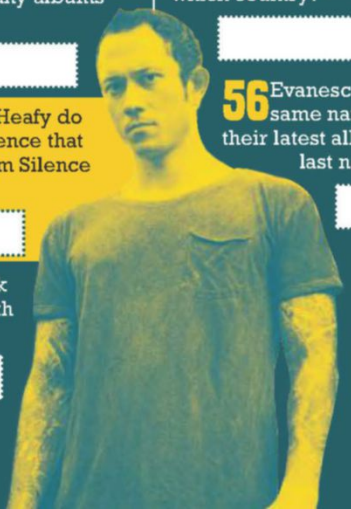
45 Whakaio Taahi announced he had left which band this year?

46 You Are We is the third album by which Sheffield metalcore band?

47 Rolo Tomassi announced that they will release Time Will Die And Love Will Bury It in March 2018. How many albums will that bring their total to?

48 What did Trivium's Matt Heafy do on The Sin And The Sentence that he didn't do on previous album Silence In The Snow?

49 What is the name of Black Veil Brides' upcoming fifth album, announced in 2017?



50 How many Ks did Kerrang! award Converge's 2017 album The Dusk In Us upon its release in November?

51 Prophets Of Rage – whose debut album came out this year – contains members of Public Enemy, Rage Against The Machine and which other legendary hip-hop group?

52 New Years Day's Ash Costello's other band, The Haxans, released their album on what appropriately spooky date in October?

53 Of what band is Kaya Tarsus the lead singer?

54 The theme tune to what cheesy 1990s TV show inspired Don Broco's T-Shirt Song, released this year?

55 Watain, who announced this year that they would soon release their sixth album Trident Wolf Eclipse, hail from which country?

56 Evanescence's drummer has the same name as the producer of their latest album. First name William, last name what?

57 What beloved Phil Collins hit did In This Moment cover on the 2017 album Rituals?

58 Me And That Man is a country/blues project from Adam 'Nergal' Darski, best known as the frontman of what legendary black metal band?

59 Rapper Machine Gun Kelly made an appearance on which nu-metal band's 2017, ninth album?

60 Rancid also released their ninth album this year. They formed the same year Terminator 2: Judgment Day came out – when was that?

61 What kind of hymns did London trio Arcane Roots release in September of this year?

62 Did You Me At Six play Reading or Leeds first this year?

63 The lead singer of the legendary Body Count also stars in which forensic-based hit TV show?

64 Counterfeit vocalist Jamie Campbell Bower made his debut on the Kerrang! cover this past year. Outside of rock, he was famously in a Harry Potter movie – but which one?

AND THAT'S YOUR LOT! THINK YOU'VE DONE WELL? HEAD TO KERRANG.COM NOW TO SEE ALL THE ANSWERS AND MARK YOUR TESTS OUT OF 100. WE'RE EXPECTING NOTHING BUT THE BEST. SO DON'T LET US DOWN, PLEASE...

LIVES

RATINGS
KKKKK = CLASSIC
KKKK = EXCELLENT
KKK = GOOD
KK = AVERAGE
K = POOR

Joel Birch became the Subway thief's latest victim

KERRANG! TOUR 2017

WITH: THE AMITY AFFLICTION, BOSTON MANOR, VUKOVI, CASEY

O2 RITZ MANCHESTER. 08.12.17

KKKK

A SPECTACULARLY DIVERSE K! TOUR BILL WORKS ITS WINTRY WAY TO MANCHESTER, WITH IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

WORDS: PAUL TRAVERS **PHOTOS:** ANDY GALLAGHER

YOU SHOULDN'T really need it, but if you did require proof that rock music in 2017 is an incredibly broad church, this year's Kerrang! Tour provides it. There are four entirely different flavours to sample, bound by the common themes of passion, excitement and loud guitars. And they're all on fire tonight.

Welsh quintet Casey kick things off with a set full of churning post-hardcore intensity. The guitars alternate between hypnotic swirls and slow-grinding power, but it's frontman Tom Weaver that gives them the edge. The sheer emotive resonance of a song like Hell, where he teeters between spoken-word poetry and an edge-of-a-breakdown rasp, really is quite stunning.

There's a wash of colour and a sudden gear change as Scotland's premier melders of pop and rock Vukovi take up the baton. Janine Shilstone admits she doesn't know what day it is, but she makes up for it by spending as much of the gig getting up close and personal down in the photo pit as she does onstage. And you don't see many vocalists whose microphone lead doubles as a skipping rope. It's *that* sort of set – energetic, ebullient and loaded with songs that mix inventive flourishes with a dose of good-time bounce.

Talking of bounce, Boston Manor give the Ritz's renowned sprung dance floor its first major workout. Stand near the back during the pop-punk rush of Lead Feet or Laika and you'll get waves in your pint; further in and you're jumping whether you like it or not. The aching restraint of Broken Glass proves they're not limited by any generic box, and with most of the UK represented by tonight's first three bands – Boston Manor hailing from up the road in Blackpool – the homegrown future looks bright.

The Amity Affliction have travelled a little further than that. Opener I Bring The Weather With Me sadly doesn't live up to its title and fill freezing Manchester with Australian summer sun, but it's a deadly way to kick off their set. The Aussie quartet's wonderfully nuanced metalcore spans the musical spectrum, from the heaviest of lurching riffs to the most glorious of melodies. The beauty and the beast vocals play a huge part in this. Yes, we're aware that we're describing a man who admitted in the K! Rockstar Test to sleeping in a wheelie bin as the 'beauty' here, but Ahren Stringer's clean vocals are heart-stoppingly angelic, providing a soaring contrast to Joel Birch's roar.

Chasing Ghosts and Pittsburgh get the pit bouncing again, while the acoustic lament of All Fucked Up grabs the crowd by the feels. It's a stunning showing from a band that balances the emotional, visceral and intellectual, and a powerful end to the Kerrang! Tour 2017, the perfect way to cap off the year.

Casey vocalist Tom Weaver couldn't help laughing at his own jokes

Vukovi's Janine Shilstone appeared to be stuck in the Upside Down

Despite bursting for the loo, Ahren Stringer was determined to finish the gig

Boston Manor's Henry Cox adopts a pose best described as 'extreme puppetry'

Our K! Tour bill were only too glad to play a special edition of Guess Who?

STAR SHOUT!

JANINE SHILSTONE

VUKOVI, VOCALS

YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT NIGHT IT WAS – IS THAT BECAUSE IT'S ALWAYS THE WEEKEND IN VUKOVI?

"I could say that every night's been a party, but really you just lose track of days on tour. You're not working 9-to-5, and it's a different kind of life. It's still work, it's tough, but it's also the beauty of being in a band."

YOU APPEAR TO HAVE DRESSED DOWN BY YOUR COLOURFUL STANDARDS TONIGHT. HOW COME?

"Yeah I have. We've literally got no clean clothes, but I like the fact our fans are so colourful. You can look out and see the glitter and bright colours and hair and be reasonably sure that's someone we brought to the show."

STAR SHOUT!

TOM WEAVER

CASEY, VOCALS

WHAT HAVE YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES OF THE K! TOUR BEEN?

"The first one I went to was Kerrang! XXV [2006] with Bullet For My Valentine. I've been to a few, and I remember watching Nekrogoblikon supporting Limp Bizkit in 2014 and going, 'What the fuck is *this*?' If you told my 16-year-old self we'd be playing it ourselves one day, I'd tell you to fuck off."

DO YOU ENJOY THE DIVERSITY OF THE BILL?

"Yes, it's one of the best things about it. When we started, we only played tours from our demographic – post-hardcore or whatever you want to call it. Now we've been the heaviest and the softest band on some bills, but it's still great to play."

STAR SHOUT!

JOEL BIRCH

THE AMITY AFFLICTION, VOCALS

HOW HAVE YOU ENJOYED THE K! TOUR 2017?

"It's been good, very good. It's the end of the year, and the end of the whole cycle for This Could Be Heartbreak. We're reconvening for the next album, and we won't be back in the UK or Europe until at least late next year. We had a pretty quiet start to the year, but a busier end. It's pretty full-on and tiring, but very rewarding, and this is a great way to end it."

ARE YOU GLAD TO HAVE BEEN HERE AS THE SNOW STARTS TO FALL?

"Yes, I love the snow. It's beautiful to see, and I really like it because I never get to see it back home. None of us are ill, either! It's been nice to see a bit of winter before we leave."

STAR SHOUT!

HENRY COX

BOSTON MANOR, VOCALS

WHAT DID YOU BRING TO THE PARTY TONIGHT?

"Just fucking energy. We're a live band, so we're all about getting people going, riling them up and getting in their faces. People usually respond to it, and tonight they definitely did. I like being in front of a crowd where people might not know you as well."

BEING FROM BLACKPOOL, IS THIS AS CLOSE TO A HOMETOWN SHOW AS YOU'LL GET ON THE KERRANG! TOUR?

"Yes, to all intents and purposes it's one of the closest places. We come to watch shows here all the time, and this is a great venue. The sound's fucking sick, and it's got that bouncy dance floor, which is always fun."

LIVES

RATINGS
KKKKK = CLASSIC
KKKK = EXCELLENT
KKK = GOOD
KK = AVERAGE
K = POOR

BABYMETAL

GREEN ARENA, HIROSHIMA

02.12.17 – 03.12.17

KKKKK

JAPANESE METAL ICONS CELEBRATE SU-METAL'S BIRTHDAY WITH THEIR MOST SPECTACULAR SHOWS EVER

WORDS: PAUL TRAVERS **PHOTOS:** TSUKASA MIYOSHI (SHOWCASE)

SO, WHAT makes the perfect gift for an important birthday? An iPhone X? A pony? A hangover? Whatever your circumstances, it's unlikely that you were ever going to be ritually crucified by a gang of cowled monks as 30-foot flames light up the night, and a group of corpse-painted metal musicians drill out a song marking your demise. And it's even less likely that after this, you'll return, be deified and ascend to the heavens in front of 14,000 adoring adherents. Sorry.

They do things differently in Japan, however, especially if the 'they' in question are BABYMETAL. Reaching the age of majority and officially becoming an adult is a big deal in Japan. It takes place at 20, rather than 18, and while attendances have been in decline over recent years, it's marked by a ceremonial Coming Of Age Day. BABYMETAL lead vocalist Suzuka Nakamoto, aka SU-METAL, has reached this threshold and, for two nights in her birthplace of Hiroshima, the band are celebrating the fact in the most spectacular way imaginable. They've decided to call this birthday bash LEGEND – S – BAPTISM XX. Naturally.

It doesn't start in ideal circumstances. A few hours before the first of the two shows, word filters through that singer YUIMETAL is too sick to play. A postponement is considered, but the decision is made to proceed, not least because fans have travelled from across Japan and beyond for these special shows. "For YUIMETAL, who unfortunately will not be playing, SU-METAL, MOAMETAL, and the entire staff team would like to come together as The One with all of the fans who will be coming to the performances," reads the official announcement circulated before the show.

'The One' refers to BABYMETAL's fanclub, and the first show is exclusively for members. Even so, demand was so high that tickets had to be distributed via a lottery system. Two nights at the enormous Green Arena sees them playing to 14,000 people, but there

The Download dog has been the subject of some terrifying cross-breeding

MOAMETAL or your nan's lamp: who wore it better?

STAR SHOUT!

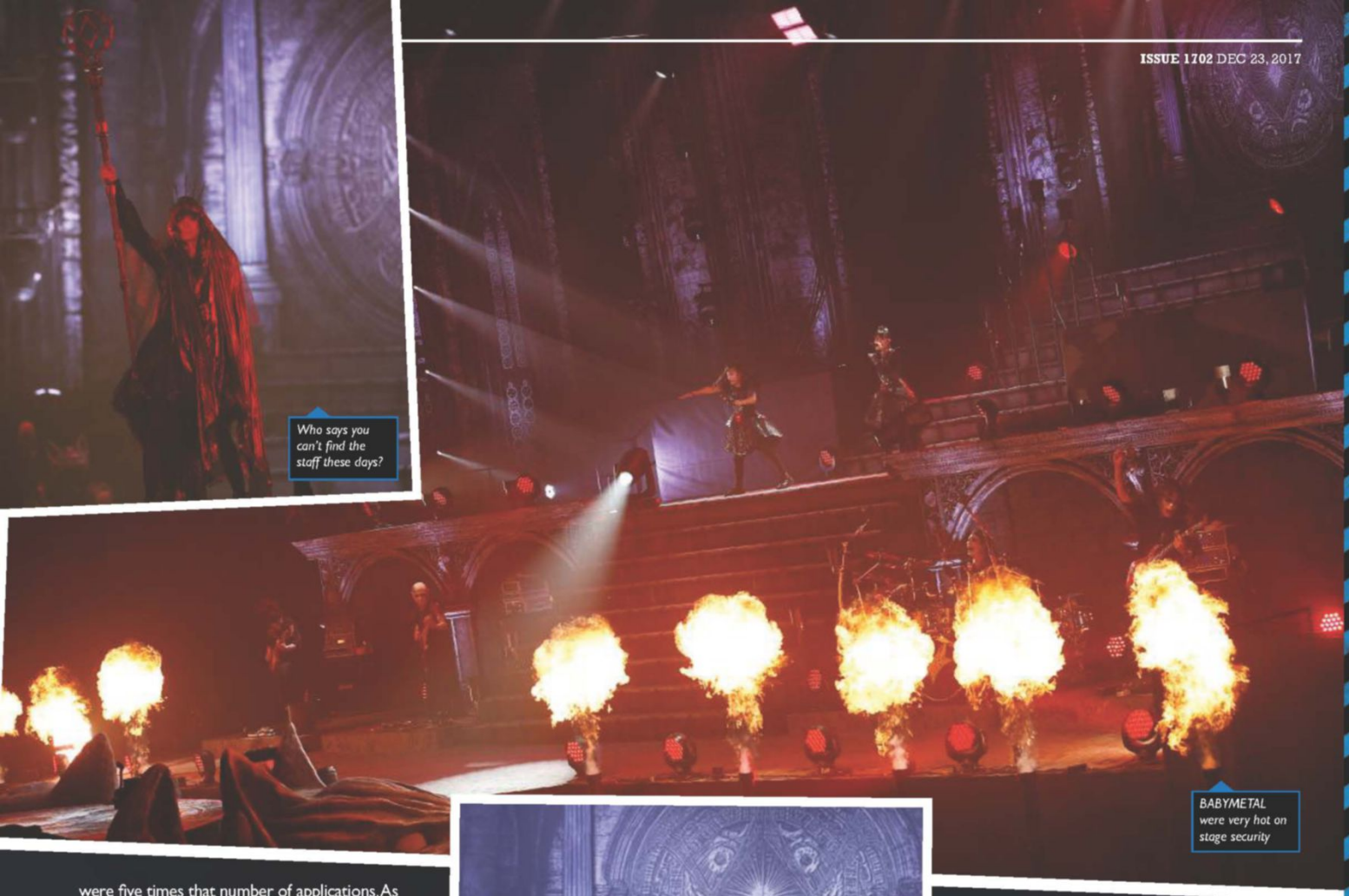
SU-METAL

BABYMETAL, VOCALS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! WHAT DID YOU WANT TO DO TO MAKE THESE SHOWS SPECIAL?
"I went into this performance thinking about how proud I am to have been born and raised in Hiroshima, and I wanted to show that I have learned and gained so much from past precious experiences. During this performance, I also wanted to express what kind of adult I would like to become in future."

DID THE FACT THESE WERE BABYMETAL'S FIRST SHOWS IN YOUR BIRTH CITY MAKE THEM EVEN MORE SPECIAL?
"Of course. I wanted to make sure that when I returned to my hometown I felt confident enough to feel that I had grown as an artist and as a person through various experiences. To fulfil this goal of doing a performance in Hiroshima was just unbelievable. I also felt very happy to hear that a lot of our fans were able to visit many of the iconic places in Hiroshima during their stay."

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM BABYMETAL'S NEXT CHAPTER?
"The ending of the story during these performances in Hiroshima was that the Messiah was reincarnated to become a new leader who would shine the light that had been lost with her singing, and unite the world as one. Only the Fox God knows the future of BABYMETAL, but as BABYMETAL we hope that we can be the leading figure like the Messiah to shine the light upon all the people we come across. And we also hope that through our performances, we can provide energy and motivation to various people across the world."



Who says you can't find the staff these days?

BABYMETAL were very hot on stage security

Someone forgot to turn on the extractor while they were having a shower

were five times that number of applications. As the band play each night, there are ticketless fans outside literally pressing their ears to the foyer windows in an attempt to hear whatever they can.

The lines of lucky ones clutching their metaphorical golden tickets, meanwhile, are all wearing identical sigil-covered robes, matching metal talismans and masks that look like a cross between a foxed-up version of a Venetian masquerade mask and Optimus Prime. This seems weird, frankly, until it's explained that The One are considered part of the whole ceremony and that these are the Three Sacred Treasures, provided with each and every ticket. You don't get that with Code Orange, do you?

The second night is open to all ticket buyers, but the costumed participation remains the same. The BABYMETAL live experience is as much theatre as it is rock'n'roll, and the opportunity for improvisation is strictly limited. But the results are absolutely spectacular.

It starts with a big-screen animation and a voiceover explaining that the people of Earth have been stricken by despair. Luckily, we're told, in the year 20XX (their date), when The Fox Eye shines, a new goddess will appear to restore hope. With that, SU-METAL emerges from the mouth of a huge Fox God, wreathed in smoke, clad in robes, clutching a staff and looking like the bigger budget granddaughter of Judas Priest's Rob Halford when he does his Nostradamus thing.

Six burly fox-headed figures pull her by massive chains attached to a platform ringed by six giant fox heads – the number six, and those particularly lupine foxes being prominent in BABYMETAL's mythology – towards a stage at the other end of the venue. Once they get there, SU-METAL points her staff, there's a bolt of fire, a huge explosion, and the fox men start clattering overgrown drums, creating a rumble like an epic fantasy war movie soundtrack. It's an intro that leaves any band you can name in the dust.

The Kami Band who provide the music might be largely anonymous, but they absolutely slay, whether galloping through bombastic, DragonForce-styled power metal on the likes of Ljime, Dame, Zettai, creating a dance-metal melee on Megitsune, or out-Metallica-ing Metallica with the drilling riffs of BABYMETAL Death. The girls at the front are most definitely the focal point, but without the Kami Band's turbo-charged engine the whole thing would stutter and fail.

The audience also play their part. This being Japan, there's rapt silence between songs following huge roars of applause, but there are also moments when the crowd look like they've been choreographed as well, jumping as one at just the right points of Doki Doki Morning, singing back the huge '*Whoa-oh*' chants of Meta Taro or throwing up six matching circle-pits as Road Of Resistance tears from the speakers.

The performance from the band onstage is quite simply astonishing as well. While SU-METAL provides the majority of lead vocals, MOAMETAL is tireless, essentially dancing and singing for two. There are karate moves during KARATE, and a staged fight complete with cartwheels during Akatsuki, with MOAMETAL dressed in older stage costumes to represent SU-METAL's growth and battle with her past self. And there's enough pyro to flame grill a squid ring at 20 feet, as the Fox Warriors return for No Rain, No Rainbow, which has been refitted with strings and piano to become a big, blockbusting show-stopper with a Slash-worthy solo.

The best is saved until last, however. The intensity of BABYMETAL Death is extended as our heroine is ritually sacrificed amid mystical props and towers of flame. It's not over yet, though, as the voiceover resumes, describing how the Messiah reincarnates into a new goddess and ascends to the heavens, flaming and carrying hope on her shoulders. "The light of hope shines through the Fox's Eye," it continues, the darkness pierced by lights shining and pulsing from all 7,000 masks. It's a magical moment that ushers in the final act of The One.

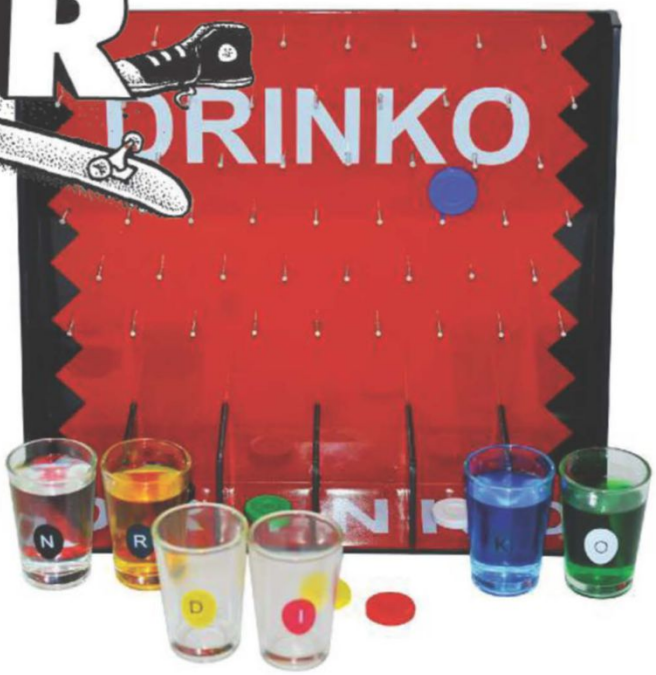
'*This is our song, this is our dream*,' sings SU-METAL, as she and MOAMETAL cross the length of the arena, this time clad in fancy gold robes and headdresses. They climb to the top of the stage, before a wall opens and stairs extend beyond, onto which BABYMETAL ascend into the light and become gods.

So ends this chapter for BABYMETAL. As a band who have never done things in an understated fashion, you expect the spectacular, but these two shows surpass anything even the wildest imagination could have thought up. Fox God alone knows how they're going to follow such a massive triumph, but with a goddess in the band now, expect nothing less than absolute divinity when they hit Download 2018.

K!LOBBER

MU$T HAV£S

DIDN'T GET WHAT YOU WANTED FOR CHRISTMAS? RETURN THAT CRAP AND BUY THIS LOT INSTEAD...



Fight off the January blues with this drinking game. You don't even have to play it with alcohol! Fill the shot glasses with kale smoothie if you're on a health kick.

£9.50 Amazon.co.uk

We love K! Tour lads Amity Affliction, but we don't much fancy sleeping in their skeleton hand bed. We'll take the floor, thanks.

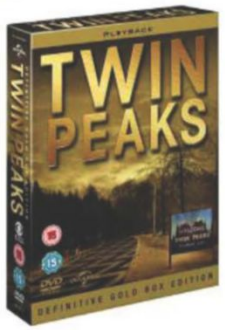
£39.99 Impericon.com

This Aston Origin Cardioid Condenser Microphone is used by the likes of Bullet For My Valentine and Nothing More. Must be good, then.

£249 Pmtonline.co.uk

Guess who this band is. Go on, guess... can't do it? Well there's a little clue on the drum kit for you. Or you could look at the website below.

£20 Twin-atlantic-uk.myshopify.com



Watch the entirety of this season one box set and still have absolutely no idea what's going on. Then do the same with season two.

£10.99 Amazon.co.uk

If you picked up some serious Christmas bounty, we'd strongly suggest you invest in this Donut Factory. You could open your own donut stall, or, y'know, sit and home and just eat them all yourself...

£400 Amazon.co.uk

Nobody wants a nosebleed while wearing a white T-shirt, but if you get one in this, you can just blame it on Frank. Problem solved.

£13.95 Paradisoclothing.com

Mmm, yes, so do we, Sleeping With Sirens. You've got eight amps there. Well, we've got 18 in our office. So ner.

£13.50 Eu.swsstore.net

Can't cope with the awful remake? Us either. Poke this pin inspired by the original into your eyes 'til you forget about it.

£4.99 Etsy.com

This might look like a contraption to take a bull's balls off, but it's actually a snowball maker. It'll stop you getting cold hands, yay.

£6.71 Amazon.co.uk

What a nice Metallica ha- wait a second... that's A Day To Remember. We don't know what to believe anymore.

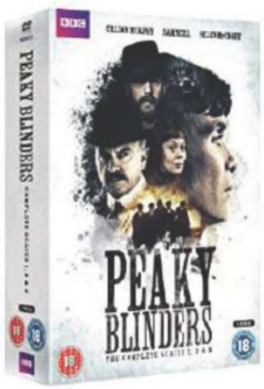
£20 Eu.adtrstore.com

To stop you getting hungry for a sarnie, fill up on tea from this mug. You'll have that house by next Tuesday.
£5.99 Grindstore.com

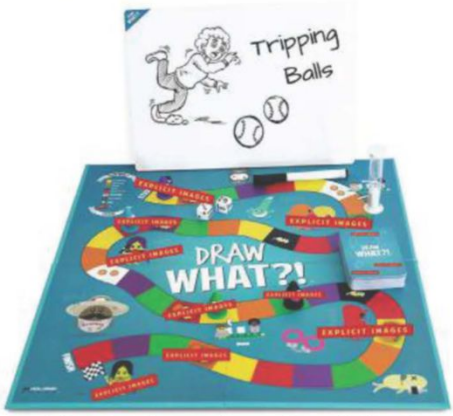
Nede Ckep sounds like something you might say if you were possessed by the Devil. We've all been there.
£17.99 Impericon.com

You could buy about four Xboxes for the price of this one Xbox coffee table. Can't eat your dinner off those other Xboxes, though, can you?
£920.54 Etsy.com

The Grinch would not like this fairy lights USB phone charger. He'll have to stick with one of the regular white Apple ones. Sorry, mate.
$21.95 (£16.35) Amazon.com



We've not watched this, but everyone keeps banging on about it. Patrick Stump likes it, too, so there's that.
£19.99 Amazon.co.uk



This fun board game makes you draw rude things for points. Go off-piste and draw Steel Panther song titles instead. You can have triple points for those.
£29.75 Amazon.co.uk

BUNDLES OF JOY

THERE'S SOME GREAT ALBUMS COMING IN 2018! AND YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS? BUNDDDDDLE!

Not only will you get Waterparks' new album Entertainment, but you'll get a whole new wardrobe with this bundle. One you can't eat spaghetti in, mind.
$199 (£148.25)
Waterparks.merchnow.com

Watain haven't been very inventive with their bundle for Trident Wolf Eclipse. We were hoping for at least a cuddley wolf toy. Sigh.
€73.90 (£64.41)
Kingsroadmerch.com

Machine Head's Catharsis package will get you a ton of vinyl, and also that charming poster of a girl bleeding all over the place from the cover. Stick her in the hallway.
£49.99
Nuclearblaststore.co.uk

Tonight Alive haven't really captured the vibe of the real Underworld with their new merch. Unless the Devil's been down the garden centre again.
$108 (£80.43)
Merchnow.com

The dog on the T-shirt in this Don Broco Technology bundle was obviously promised walkies and taken to the vets instead. Broco tried doing the same to us.
£25
Donbroco.tmstor.es

For just £60 you'll get an iPhone in this Of Mice & Men Defy merch package! Eh, what do you mean 'we should read the small print'?!
$84.50 (£62.92)
Riserecords.merchnow.com

DON'T MISS

FIVE FINGER DEATH PUNCH

ZOLTAN BATHORY UPDATES US ON A REJUVENATED FRONTMAN AS THE METALLERS PREPARE FOR SOME BIG UK SHOWS...

HEY, ZOLTAN! ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT COMING BACK TO THE UK?
ZOLTAN BATHORY (*GUITAR*): "Oh, of course. The UK is really good to us and after the U.S. it was the first place to really accept us. We have die-hard fucking fans and we see them even when we're touring other countries. They come out to Germany, and I've even seen kids from England show up in Russia. They bring their British flags and wait for us to say hello. This tour has been a long time coming."

AND IT'S PART OF YOUR BIGGEST EUROPEAN ARENA TOUR EVER...
"The band blew up in the U.S. pretty quickly, so we could tour with massive stage sets, which is how rock'n'roll is supposed to be. Heavy metal has a visual element to it and I'm a big fan of Rammstein and KISS and Iron Maiden – the bands putting on a big show. We've played some big shows before, but this is the first time we've brought the whole bells and whistles set-up to Europe. This is the first time I've thought, 'Okay, if you're going to see Five Finger Death Punch, this is the one you should come to.'"

DO YOU EVER MISS THE SMALL CLUB SHOWS WHERE YOU CAN SMELL THE AUDIENCE AND SEE THE WHITES OF THEIR EYES?
"No, is the short answer (*laughs*)! To me, the bigger a show is, the better. I love festivals when there are 100,000 people. There is so much energy; it's just so powerful that you can't compare it to anything else. Of course, you have to play those clubs, and we did – and it's fun. I remember those shows where the sweat collects and drips from the ceiling. There were 300-capacity venues with 500 kids in there.

> ***"THERE'S SO MUCH ENERGY AND SO MUCH POWER..."***
> **ZOLTAN BATHORY**

No-one can fit through the door, there are kids hanging from exposed pipes and just crazy shit. It was cool, but I do like the big stage."

AND HOW'S FRONTMAN IVAN MOODY DOING NOW?
"He's sober. He has the support of the band but he also has these fit and sober coaches to make sure that he's okay. Most importantly, he's healthy. We were worried for him because things were looking really grim. It's not easy, but he's five months sober now and his performances are better than ever. He's firing on all cylinders and it's good to see; the colour is back in his face and he's enjoying being onstage. Imagine going onstage hungover every day – it's a fucking nightmare. Now he wants to be there and he's happy and he wants to play more songs. We have to tell him, 'Dude, we're out of time.' It's amazing because before he was going, 'Let's get it over and get to the bar.'"

FINALLY, YOU'VE GOT IN FLAMES AND OF MICE & MEN SUPPORTING YOU – IS IT IMPORTANT TO PUT A GOOD TOURING PACKAGE TOGETHER?
"Of course, but you have to calculate things. You have to have a bit of an overlap in the fanbases. With In Flames, I've been a fan of those guys for a long, long time. At the time, when nu-metal was raging in America, I was listening to Swedish bands like At The Gates and In Flames. I grew up on European metal and I felt like these bands were carrying the torch for pure traditional metal when it wasn't as popular. I think this is a great line-up for a show."

DATES: Leeds First Direct Arena December 20, London SSE Arena, Wembley 21. Support: In Flames, Of Mice & Men.

WORDS: PAUL TRAVERS **PHOTO:** GETTY

MURRAYBOX

THE XCERTS FRONTMAN PRESENTS KERRANG!'S TV CHRISTMAS GUIDE. HIS FESTIVE VIEWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS...

DECEMBER 23

HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE – ITV – 1:35pm

"So, my flatmate, Ali Dean of Architects fame, only recently admitted to me that he had never seen a Harry Potter movie in his life. This, of course, made me question our current living situation and indeed our entire friendship, because as we all know, you can't fully trust someone who isn't a fan of Harry Potter. I'm happy to announce Ali has now seen the first three movies: he's not a fan, he does indeed have a heart made of stone, and he does not have my trust."

THE HUNGER GAMES: CATCHING FIRE – E4 – 9pm

"Interestingly enough, I really didn't enjoy the first Hunger Games movie, but this one is fantastic. What's really baffling about my whole love/hate relationship with the franchise is that I didn't watch the last two movies. I don't know if love conquers hate. I really didn't hate the first one; it was just one big set-up, and it was very dull. Also, if you've ever seen Battle Royale, you'll understand why the disappointment was so weighty. If you are intrigued, watch Battle Royale with your friends or on your own – not with nana."

CHRISTMAS EVE

THE SANTA CLAUSE – BBC1 – 10:30am

"It's a '90s Disney movie starring Tim Allen, what's not to love? A few years back I got heavily into Christmas movies. Now, I know what you're thinking, 'Murray, everyone loves a Christmas movie,' but everyone loves a Christmas classic! I was spending my days watching tragic Channel 5 Christmas movies, welling up like an infant in dire need of attention. I would be late for social gatherings, I'd make excuses not to go out, I'd put my phone on silent so I wouldn't be disturbed... it was quite something. This here is a Christmas classic. If you want a Christmas tragedy, watch I'll Be Home For Christmas, which coincidentally stars Jonathan Taylor Thomas who starred in Home Improvement along with Tim Allen. Boom! Useless fact."

GOGGLEBOX 2017 – CHANNEL 4 – 9pm

"The idea of watching people on TV, watching TV, which in turn creates 'celebrities', freaks me out. Don't get me wrong, I am all for trashy TV when the moment is right, but whenever this is on, I just think, 'Surely I could be doing something better with my time.'"

MARY, MEL & SUE'S BIG CHRISTMAS THANK YOU – BBC1 – 7pm

"Now, this is a show I can get behind. I know nothing about it, but from the description above, my heart is glowing. I'm a huge Bake Off fan, so any chance to watch Mary Berry and co., I'm all in."

ANCHORMAN: THE LEGEND OF RON BURGUNDY – FILM4 – 9pm

"I wonder if anyone reading this has never seen Anchorman? What a strange thought. If you have never seen this movie, you absolutely must stay in and watch it. I don't really know what to say about it other than that it is completely absurd in the most profound way possible. 'He had a voice that could make a wolverine purr and suits so fine they made Sinatra look like a hobo.'"

CHRISTMAS DAY

TOP OF THE POPS CHRISTMAS SPECIAL – BBC1 – 12:20pm

"It's strange that we haven't been asked to appear on Top Of The Pops, considering we released Feels Like Falling In Love, which, in my unbiased opinion, is the biggest pop hit of the year. Watch TOTP2 instead, as you'll see The Pogues."

TOY STORY 3 – BBC1 – 1:20pm

"I'm going to throw this out there: the greatest trilogy of all time? I believe they are making a fourth movie, which I am slightly sceptical about, because the last movie was the perfect way to conclude the story. But let's stay on the positive side and keep the faith."

FIRST DATES AT CHRISTMAS – CHANNEL 4 – 9pm

"Remember when I said I have time for trashy TV when the moment is right? First Dates is forever the right moment. It has everything from romance to drama, comedy to heartbreak, and how could you not want to catch a glimpse of [maître d'] Fred Sirieix? The man is holy."

BOXING DAY

JURASSIC WORLD – ITV – 6:40pm

"When I saw this movie, my friend let out an audible sigh when he realised the dinosaurs were created by CGI. Everyone in the cinema understood the sigh, and it ruined the experience for all in attendance. I enjoyed this movie, though."

DECEMBER 27

SUPER 8 – FILM 4 – 6:45pm

"If you're having Stranger Things withdrawals, this is necessary viewing. It's directed by JJ Abrams and produced by Steven Spielberg, so you know it's full of the good stuff. This is one for the whole family – unless some family members dislike sci-fi, in which case, watch this in your bedroom with the lights out."

DECEMBER 28

WHAT BRITAIN BOUGHT IN 2017 – CHANNEL 4 – 9pm

"This sounds triumphantly dull. Don't watch this show! Do you know how much good trouble you can get yourself into at 9pm instead? A lot! I guarantee you a lot of people bought the Sam Smith record and kale. That's all you need to know. Go live."

NYE PARTY GUIDE

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN SEE IN 2018 WITH SOME MOSHING, HEADBANGING AND A LOAD OF AWESOME ROCK TUNES...

DECEMBER 30

FACE DOWN'S PRE-NEW YEAR'S EVE! KING'S CROSS SCALA
10pm – 6am
ADMISSION: £9 WITHOUT FLYER / £8 WITH FLYER

With live music from parody trio The Midnight Beast and, um, a Busted tribute band, there's really no other way to start your New Year's celebrations early, tbh. Throw in rock karaoke and an adult-sized ball-pit, and we're surprised you're not already in the queue.

Facebook.com/facedownrockclub

DECEMBER 31

UPRAWR
BIRMINGHAM ASYLUM
11pm – 6am
ADMISSION: £10

We're not gonna pretend like cheap drinks aren't a massive sell here, because, let's face it, they are. But affordable booze on *top* of CO2 blasts, confetti cannons, an insane amount of balloons and a killer soundtrack? With the added bonus of screwing cab drivers out of expensive fares by partying until 6am? We're in.

Totaluprawr.com

CAMDEN ROCKS NEW YEAR'S EVE BONANZA THE UNDERWORLD
9pm – 4am
TICKETS: £20

Kiss 2017 goodbye at Camden's premier sweatbox. Keeping it simple, resident and special guest DJs handle the soundtrack, and a well-stocked bar gives you all the ammo you need for one of the best nights of your life. What more could you want?

Theunderworldcamden.co.uk

REBELLION'S NEW YEAR'S EVE MANCHESTER REBELLION
9pm – 7am
ADMISSION: £15 ON THE DOOR / £10 IN ADVANCE

Heading to a club and having a sing-along a bit too mundane for you? Rebellion's funfair-themed NYE is the night for you. Pin a tail on a donkey while downing fine libations and contemplating doing the Limbo. Flexible partiers only, though.

Rebellion.club

APOCALYPSE BRIGHTON PAVTAV
10pm – 5am
ADMISSION: £12

The end is nigh... apparently. Go out with a serious bang, then, with the fine folk at Brighton's Pavtav. Brace yourself for seven hours of rock and metal blasting your eardrums to pieces. Oh, and drinks are two quid...

Apocalypsebrighton.com

MY VENUE

THE GARAGE

HIGHBURY, LONDON

20-22 HIGHBURY CORNER, LONDON, N5 1RD

ADAM POPPLE, GENERAL MANAGER

THE GARAGE RECENTLY CHANGED HANDS AND HAD A MASSIVE REVAMP – ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE RESULTS OF THAT?

"We love how the revamp turned out! We've been getting loads of really positive responses from artists, promoters and customers."

AWESOME. DO YOU FEEL THE VENUE HAS NOW UPPED ITS GAME TO COMPETE WITH THE OTHERS IN LONDON?

"Definitely. Having installed a new PA and a new lighting rig, it's really pushed the production values of the venue forward. Coupled with the new bar at the venue, we're certainly a more attractive proposition for bands and customers alike."

AND YOU HAVE THE NEW THOUSAND ISLAND VENUE UPSTAIRS. IS IT GOOD HAVING TWO VENUES TO WORK WITH?

"Yeah, it really helps us appeal to so many more bands. A lot of acts like to play really intimate shows, and with the upstairs space at 150 capacity we can get shows with loads of upcoming acts, as well bands looking to play their first shows in the city."

WHAT GIGS HAVE BEEN HIGHLIGHTS FOR YOU?

"Highlights for us have been Rise Against, Brontide, Slowdive and Marmozets. But we've had so many more this year that the list would be too long."

WHAT 2018 GIGS ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

"We're all looking forward to Rolo Tomassi's show in April. They recently sold out a show at our sister venue, Borderline [also in London], so we can't wait for this one. We're also looking forward to the Rocket Recordings' 20th birthday party show with Goat, Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs and loads of other bands next March."

SOUNDS LIKE FUN. LOOKING BACK ON 2017, WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FOR THE VENUE?

"The biggest challenge was the revamp at the start of the year. Those sorts of projects are always time-sensitive, and issues can arise fairly quickly. We got there in the end, though, and everyone is happy with the results."

SO THE FUTURE IS LOOKING BRIGHT FOR THE GARAGE?

"The future holds loads more exciting gigs – some of which are yet to be announced. We're all looking forward to watching [alternative club night] Gonzo grow from strength to strength, and seeing the The Garage put its stamp on the city as being the best live music and club venue around."

BOOKING NOW

36 CRAZYFISTS
Glasgow Cathouse January 18, 2018, Manchester Academy III 19, O2 Academy2 Birmingham 20, London O2 Academy Islington 21.

A PERFECT CIRCLE
O2 Apollo Manchester June 12, 2018, London O2 Academy Brixton 13.

ALESTORM
O2 Academy Liverpool February 9, 2018, Sheffield Corporation 10, Newcastle Uni 11, Aberdeen Garage 13, O2 ABC Glasgow 14, Belfast Mandela Hall 15, Dublin Tivoli 16, Birmingham HRH Metal 17, O2 Ritz Manchester 18, Leeds Stylus 20, Norwich Waterfront 21, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 22, Brighton Concorde II 23, Bristol Motion 24, Southampton Engine Rooms 25. Support: The Dread Crew Of Oddwood, Rumahoy.

ALIEN ANT FARM
O2 Academy Bristol February 6, 2018, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 7, O2 Ritz Manchester 8, Norwich Waterfront 10, O2 Academy Leeds 11, Birmingham O2 Institute 12, Dublin Academy 14, Belfast Limelight II 15, Glasgow Garage 16, O2 Academy Newcastle 17, Nottingham Rock City 18. Support: SOiL, Local H.

ALL TIME LOW
Glasgow SECC March 12, 2018, Cardiff Motorpoint Arena 14, Birmingham Genting Arena 15, Manchester Arena 16, London Alexandra Palace 17. Support: Pierce The Veil.

ANDREW W.K.
Cardiff Great Hall April 13, 2018, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 14, O2 Academy2 Birmingham 15, Norwich Waterfront 18, Portsmouth Pyramids Wedgewood Rooms 19, O2 Ritz Manchester 20, Glasgow Garage 21.

ARCANE ROOTS
Gateshead Sage February 27, 2018, London Heaven March 1, Manchester Gorilla 2, Sheffield Leadmill 3, Glasgow Oran Mor 4, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 6, Bristol Trinity 8. Support: Brutus.

ARCH ENEMY
O2 ABC Glasgow February 9, 2018, Nottingham Rock City 10, London Camden KOKO 11, O2 Ritz Manchester 13, O2 Academy Bristol 14. Support: Wintersun, Tribulation.

ARCHITECTS
London Alexandra Palace February 3, 2018. Support: While She Sleeps, Counterparts.

AS IT IS
Nottingham Rescue Rooms March 9, 2018, Manchester Academy II 10, Glasgow Garage 11, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 13, Cardiff Globe 15, London Camden KOKO 16. Support: Like Pacific, Grayscale.

AT THE DRIVE IN
London O2 Academy Brixton March 9, 2018, O2 Academy Newcastle 10, O2 Academy Birmingham 12, O2 Apollo Manchester 13, O2 Academy Glasgow 15. Support: Death From Above, Le Butcherettes.

BLACK VEIL BRIDES / ASKING ALEXANDRIA
O2 Academy Birmingham January 23, 2018, Manchester Academy 24, O2 Academy Glasgow 25, London O2 Academy Brixton 27.

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY
London Royal Albert Hall April 5, 2018, Dublin Tivoli 7, Belfast Limelight 8 – 9.

BLACK MOTH
Brighton Hope & Ruin February 7, 2018, London Boston Music Room 8. Support: Grave Lines.

BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL 2018
Line-up: Judas Priest, Gojira, Nightwish, Emperor, Nails, Devildriver, Watain, Orden Ogan, Combichrist, Memoriam, Septicflesh, Doro, Fozzy, Bloodbath. Derby Catton Hall Park August 9 – 12, 2018.

BOWLING FOR SOUP
O2 Academy Glasgow February 9, 2018, O2 Academy Newcastle 10, O2 Academy Sheffield 11, Nottingham Rock City 12, O2 Academy Birmingham 13, Norwich UEA 14, O2 Apollo Manchester 15, Cardiff Motorpoint Arena 16, London O2 Academy Brixton 17. Support: The Aquabats!, Army Of Freshmen.

BRIAN FALLON & THE HOWLING WEATHER
O2 Institute Birmingham February 20, 2018, O2 Ritz Manchester 21, O2 ABC Glasgow 22, London KOKO Camden 23, Nottingham Rock City 24, Bristol SXW 25, Newcastle Boiler Shop March 8, Leeds Beckett 9. Support: Dave Hause.

CARNIFEX
London Tufnell Park Dome February 26, 2018, Birmingham Mama Roux's 27, Glasgow G2 28, Manchester Academy III March 1, Leeds Key Club 2, Bridgend Hobos 3. Support: Oceano, Aversions Crown, Disentomb.

THE DAMNED
O2 Academy Newcastle January 26, 2018, Dundee Caird Hall 27, O2 Academy Glasgow 28, O2 Academy Leeds 30, Manchester Academy 31, O2 Academy Birmingham February 1, O2 Academy Leicester 3, Nottingham Rock City 4, Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall 6, Southend Cliffs Pavilion 7, Cardiff Great Hall 9, O2 Academy Bristol 10, O2 Academy Bournemouth 11, O2 Guildhall Southampton 13, Bexhill De La Warr Pavilion 14, London O2 Forum 17.

DANCE GAVIN DANCE / VEIL OF MAYA
Birmingham Asylum March 3, 2018, Bristol Marble Factory 4, Newcastle Riverside 5, Glasgow Garage 6, Manchester Academy II 7, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 8, London O2 Academy Islington 9.

DESERTFEST 2018
Line-up: Monster Magnet, Nebula, Eyehategod, Jex Thoth, Planet Of Zeus, Black Moth, The Black Wizards, Graveyard, Napalm Death, Warning, Eyehategod, Winterfylleth, Five The Hierophant. London Camden May 4 – 6 @ various venues.

DESPISED ICON
London Dome Tufnell Park February 11, 2018, Birmingham Mama Roux's 12, Manchester Gorilla 13. Support: Malevolence, Archspire, Vulvodynia.

DON BROCO
Portsmouth Pyramids February 8, 2018, O2 Academy Bristol 9, Cardiff Great Hall 10, Norwich UEA 12, Nottingham Rock City 13, O2 Academy Birmingham 15, Manchester Academy 16, O2 Academy Leeds 17, Newcastle Northumbria Institute 19, Aberdeen Garage 20, Glasgow Barrowland 21.

DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL 2018
Line-up: Ozzy Osbourne, Avenged Sevenfold, Guns N' Roses, Marilyn Manson, BABYMETAL, Asking Alexandria, Black Veil Brides, Alexisonfire, Bullet For My Valentine, Rise Against, Parkway Drive, Body Count, The Hives, In This Moment, Neck Deep, Meshuggah, Mayday Parade, The Pink Slips, WSTR, Dreamstate. Derby Donington Park June 8 – 10, 2018.

EMP PERSISTENCE TOUR
Line-up: Hatebreed, Madball, Terror, Power Trip, Broken Teeth, Insanity Alert. London O2 Forum Kentish Town January 28, 2018.

EUROPE
Manchester Academy September 14, 2018, Glasgow Barrowland 15, O2 Academy Newcastle 17, Nottingham Rock City 18, O2 Institute Birmingham 19, Cardiff St. David's Hall 21, Portsmouth Pyramids Centre 22, London Royal Albert Hall 23, Brighton Dome 24. Support: King King.

EVANESCENCE
London Royal Festival Hall March 30 – 31, 2018, O2 Apollo Manchester 2, Nottingham Arena 3, Glasgow Armadillo 5, Sheffield City Hall 6.

FALL OUT BOY
London Brixton Electric January 11, 2018. Birmingham Barclaycard Arena March 27, 2018, Cardiff Motorpoint Arena 28, Manchester Arena 29, London O2 Arena 31.

FANGCLUB
Leeds Lending Rooms January 23, 2018, Glasgow Garage Attic 25, Birmingham Sunflower Lounge 26, London Thousand Island 27.

FEEDER
William Aston Hall Wrexham March 5, 2018, O2 Academy Bristol 7, Norwich Nick Rayns LCR UEA 8, Manchester Academy 10, Glasgow Barrowland 11, O2 Academy Leeds 13, O2 Academy Birmingham 14, Nottingham Rock City 16, London O2 Academy Brixton 17.

JUST ANNOUNCED

ASTROID BOYS
Brighton Haunt March 7, 2018, London Tufnell Park Dome 8, Norwich Waterfront 9, Birmingham Asylum 10, Manchester Rebellion 11, Glasgow King Tut's 12, Newcastle Riverside 13, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 14, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 15, Cardiff Y Plas 30.

DREAM STATE
Guildford Boileroom February 8, 2018, Scunthorpe Cafe Indiependent 9, Oxford Cellar 10, Birmingham Asylum2 11, Bristol Exchange 12, Manchester Star & Garter 14, Stoke Sugarmill 15, Peterborough Met Lounge 16, Hull Adelphi 18, York Basement 19, Derby Hairy Dog 23, Tunbridge Wells Forum 25, London Camden Assembly 26. Support: Chapter And Verse.

THE BRONX
London Camden Black Heart January 14, 2018, Leeds Key Club 16, Birmingham Mama Roux's 17, Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach 18, Kingston Fighting Cocks 19.

DEEZ NUTS / TRASH TALK
London Camden Underworld March 25, 2018, Manchester Rebellion Club 26, Birmingham Mama Roux's 27. Support: Brutality Will Prevail, Capsize, Boundaries.

STONE SOUR
Manchester O2 Apollo June 17, 2018, London Camden Roundhouse 18, Nottingham Rock City 19.

TECH FEST 2018
Line-up: The Acacia Strain, The Contortionist, Cyclamen, Amogh Symphony, Vola, DVSR, Jinjer, Tides From Nebula, Voyager, Bloodshot Dawn, Rishabh Seen, The Surrealist, Damned Spring Fragrantia, Chris Schiermann, Siamese, Stomb, Leeched, You Win Again Gravity. Newark Showground July 5 – 9, 2018.

THE WORD ALIVE
Plymouth Underground February 3, 2018, Leeds Key Club 4, London Camden Assembly 5, Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach 6, Birmingham Flapper 7. Support: Continents.

STARSET
Manchester Academy III March 21, 2018, London O2 Academy Islington 23, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 24, Bristol Fleece 25.

PHOTO: GETTY

CONVERGE
Manchester Academy II April 25, 2018, London Camden Electric Ballroom 26. Support: Crowbar, Thou, Grave Pleasures.

FIZZY BLOOD
Manchester Soup Kitchen February 22, 2018, Glasgow Old Hairdressers 23, Leeds Headrow House 24, Birmingham Sunflower Lounge 27, London Camden Assembly 28.

FOO FIGHTERS
Manchester Etihad Stadium June 19, 2018, London Stadium 22 – 23. Support added: Wolf Alice (19 and 22 only), Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes (22 only), The Kills (23 only), Slaves (23 only).

THE FRONT BOTTOMS
Manchester Albert Hall February 9, Glasgow Barrowland 10, O2 Academy Newcastle 11, Dublin Vicar Street 13, Belfast Mandela Hall 14, O2 Academy Sheffield 16, Nottingham Rock City 17, Portsmouth Pyramids Centre 24, Norwich Waterfront 25, O2 Institute Birmingham 26, O2 Academy Bristol 27, London Camden Roundhouse 28. Support: The Smith Street Band, Brick + Mortar.

GRETA VAN FLEET
Manchester Deaf Institute March 30, 2018, O2 Institute3 Birmingham 31, Glasgow King Tut's April 1, London O2 Academy Islington 4.

HEAVY SCOTLAND
Line-up: Carcass, Gama Bomb, Nervosa, Perpetua. Edinburgh Corn Exchange August 31 – September 2, 2018.

IRON MAIDEN
Newcastle Metro Radio Arena July 31, 2018, Belfast SSE Arena August 2, 2018, Aberdeen AECC BHGE Arena 4, Manchester Arena 6, Birmingham Genting Arena 7, London O2 Arena 10. Support: Killswitch Engage.

LACUNA COIL
London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire January 19, 2018.

LOATHE / HOLDING ABSENCE
Bristol Thekla February 28, 2018, Manchester Star & Garter March 1, Glasgow Audio 2, Newcastle Think Tank? 3, Leeds Key Club 4, Nottingham Bodega 6, Birmingham Asylum 7, London Boston Music Room 8, Bournemouth Anvil 9, Bridgend Hobos 10.

LOWER THAN ATLANTIS
Lincoln Engine Shed April 2, 2018, Cambridge Junction 3, Leamington Spa Assembly 4, Swansea Sin City 6, Pontypridd Muni Arts Centre 7, Gloucester Guildhall 8, Bath Komedia 9, Exeter Lemongrove 11, Southampton Engine Rooms 12, Watford Colosseum 13, Southend Chinnerys 14, Brighton Concorde II 15, O2 Academy Oxford May 3, Reading Sub89 4, Wrexham Central Station 5, Liverpool Hangar34 7, Aberdeen Lemon Tree 8, Edinburgh Liquid Rooms 9, Middlesbrough Empire 11, Hull Welly 12, York Fibbers 13, Sheffield Plug 14.

MACHINE HEAD
O2 Guildhall Southampton May 13, 2018, Cardiff University 14, O2 Academy Bristol 15, O2 Academy Birmingham 17, London Camden Roundhouse 18 – 19, Nottingham Rock City 21, O2 Academy Newcastle 22, O2 Academy Glasgow 23, Manchester Academy 25.

MARMOZETS
Cardiff Tramshed February 2, 2018, Southampton Engine Rooms 3, Brighton Concorde II 4, Cambridge Junction 6, London Student Central ULU 7, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 8, Newcastle Riverside 9, Sheffield Leadmill 11, Edinburgh Liquid Room 12. Support: Queen Zee And The Sasstones.

THE MENZINGERS
Dublin Whelans January 28, 2018, Belfast Limelight 29, Bristol SWX 31, Glasgow SWG3 February 1, O2 Ritz Manchester 2, London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 3. Support: PUP, Cayetana.

MILK TEETH
Bristol Exchange March 13, 2018, Oxford Bullingdon 14, Liverpool Buyers Club 15, Huddersfield Parish 16, Edinburgh Mash House 17, Manchester Deaf Institute 19, Birmingham Mama Roux's 20, Milton Keynes Craufurd Arms 21, London Camden Underworld 23, Bournemouth Anvil 24, Plymouth Junction 25. Support: Fangclub, Nervus.

MISS MAY I
Southampton Talking Heads January 22, 2018, Glasgow G2 23, Birmingham Mama Roux's 24, Manchester Dead Shed 25, London Camden Underworld 26, Bristol Exchange 27. Support: Fit For A King, Void Of Vision, Currents.

MODERN LIFE IS WAR
Brighton Haunt June 25, 2018, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 26, Bristol Exchange 27, London Camden Underworld 28.

MONGOL HORDE
Glasgow King Tut's January 25, 2018, Manchester Academy III 26, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 27, London King's Cross Scala 28.

MOOSE BLOOD
Nottingham Rock City March 2, 2018, Manchester Academy 3, Glasgow QMU 5, O2 Academy Newcastle 6, O2 Institute Birmingham 8, O2 Academy Bristol 9, London Camden Roundhouse 10. Support: The Dangerous Summer.

MOTIONLESS IN WHITE
Southampton Engine Rooms January 18, 2018, O2 Academy Bristol 19, Leeds Stylus 20, Glasgow Garage 22, Newcastle Riverside 23, London KOKO Camden 25, O2 Institute Birmingham 26, O2 Ritz Manchester 27, Norwich Waterfront 28. Support: Cane Hill, Ice Nine Kills.

NICKELBACK
Glasgow SSE Hydro May 3, 2018, Leeds First Direct Arena 5, Liverpool Echo Arena 7, Manchester Arena 8, Birmingham Genting Arena 10, London O2 Arena 11, Nottingham Motorpoint Arena 13. Support: Seether.

PACESHIFTERS
St Albans Horn February 14, 2018, Liverpool Sound 15, Glasgow Garage 16, Newcastle Think Tank? 17, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 18, Nottingham Bodega 20, London Assembly Camden 21, Tunbridge Wells Forum 22, Brighton Sticky Mike's Frog Bar 23.

PARADISE LOST
Colchester Arts Centre February 15, 2018, Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms 16, Bristol Thekla 17, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 18, Belfast Limelight II 20, Dublin Tivoli 21, Glasgow Classic Grand 22, Manchester Gorilla 23.

PARAMORE
Cardiff Motorpoint Arena January 11, 2018, London O2 Arena 12, Birmingham Genting Arena 14, Manchester Arena 19, Glasgow SSE Hydro 20.

PEARL JAM
London O2 Arena June 18 – 19, 2018.

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE
London Finsbury Park June 30, 2018. Support: Iggy Pop, The Hives, Run The Jewels.

RAGE / FIREWIND
London Camden Underworld January 21, 2018, Sheffield Corporation 22.

RAMBLIN' MAN FAIR
Line-up: Halestorm, Blackberry Smoke, Sons Of Apollo, Steve Earle And The Dukes. Maidstone Mote Park June 30 – July 1, 2018.

REEF / THE WILDHEARTS / TERRORVISION
Manchester Academy May 4, 2018, Birmingham Digbeth Arena 5, London Eventim Apollo Hammersmith 6, O2 Academy Glasgow 19, O2 Academy Newcastle 20.

ROLO TOMASSI
Glasgow Audio April 3, 2018, Manchester Deaf Institute 4, Birmingham Flapper 5, Bristol Exchange 6, London Garage 7, Leeds Strangeforms 8.

SEAWAY
Bristol Exchange January 10, 2018, Nottingham Bodega 11, Leeds Key Club 12, Glasgow Stereo 13, Manchester Rebellion 14, O2 Institute3 Birmingham 15, Southampton Joiners 16, London Garage 17.

SKINDRED
Norwich UEA April 19, 2018, O2 Guildhall Southampton 20, Nottingham Rock City 21, Manchester Academy 22, O2 ABC Glasgow 24, O2 Academy Bristol 25, O2 Academy Leeds 27, London O2 Academy Brixton 28, O2 Institute Birmingham 29. Support: CKY.

SLAM DUNK FESTIVAL 2018
Line-up: Jimmy Eat World, Taking Back Sunday, Sleeping With Sirens, State Champs, Four Year Strong, Trash Boat, Good Charlotte, PVRIS, Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Thursday, Creeper, Every Time I Die, Knuckle Puck, Real Friends, Crown The Empire. Leeds City Centre May 26, 2018, Hatfield Park 27, Birmingham NEC Arena 28.

STARSET
Manchester Academy III March 21, 2018, London O2 Academy Islington 23, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 24, Bristol Fleece 25.

STONE FREE FESTIVAL
Line-up: Megadeth, Scorpions, Yes, Roger Hodgson, Joanne Shaw Taylor. London O2 Arena June 16 – 17, 2018.

TESTAMENT
Bristol Motion March 29, 2018, O2 Ritz Manchester 30, O2 Institute Birmingham 31, Dublin Vicar Street April 1, 2018, Glasgow QMU 2, London Camden KOKO 4. Support: Annihilator, Vader.

THIRTY SECONDS TO MARS
Cardiff Motorpoint Arena March 23, 2018, Manchester Arena 24, Glasgow SSE Hydro 25, London O2 Arena 27, Birmingham Barclaycard Arena 29.

TONIGHT ALIVE
Manchester O2 Ritz March 6, 2018, London KOKO 8, Glasgow QMU 10, Nottingham Rock City 11, Leeds Stylus 12, Bristol Motion 13. Support: With Confidence, The Gospel Youth.

TRIVIUM
O2 Academy Bristol April 16, 2018, O2 Birmingham Academy 17, O2 Academy Glasgow 19, Manchester Academy 20, London O2 Academy Brixton 21. Support: Code Orange, Power Trip, Venom Prison.

THE USED
Nottingham Rock City February 11, 2018, O2 Ritz Manchester 12, O2 Academy Bristol 15, London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 16.

WATERPARKS
O2 Institute Birmingham March 1, 2018, Dublin Academy 2, Leeds Stylus 3, London KOKO Camden 4, O2 ABC Glasgow 6, O2 Ritz Manchester 7, Cardiff Y Plas 8, Southampton Engine Rooms 9, Brighton Concorde II 10.

WHILE SHE SLEEPS
O2 Academy Bristol February 5, 2018, O2 Institute Birmingham 6, O2 ABC Glasgow 8, O2 Ritz Manchester 10.

WITHIN TEMPTATION
O2 Academy Birmingham November 9, 2018, O2 Apollo Manchester 10, O2 Academy Glasgow 11, London O2 Academy Brixton 13.

THE XCERTS
O2 Academy3 Leicester February 18, 2018, Sheffield Plug 19, Dublin Whelans 20, O2 ABC Glasgow 23, Aberdeen Garage 24, Stockton-On-Tees Georgian Theatre 25, Manchester Deaf Institute 26, Cambridge Portland Arms 28, Wolverhampton Slade Rooms March 1, London Heaven 2, Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach 3, Southampton Joiners 4.

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EDITORIAL

WHAT'S THE ONE THING ABOUT CHRISTMAS THAT YOU HATE?

EDITOR: Sam Coare (*The month-long hell that builds up to it*)
ART EDITOR: Steve Beech (*The heating being on*)
ASSOCIATE EDITOR (REVIEWS): Nick Ruskell (*All of it. No, but seriously… Fucking morons in the pub who don't know what they're doing. Out of the way, part-timers!*)
DEPUTY ART EDITOR: Matt Dykzeul (*Being so far from family*)
PRODUCTION EDITOR: Emily Carter (*Weighing four stone heavier afterwards*)
LISTINGS EDITOR: James Hingle (*Brussels sprout farts*)
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Katie Parsons (*The piles and piles of unnecessary wasted paper*), Jennyfer J. Walker (*The cinema being closed. Takes the piss*)
DIGITAL EDITOR: Bob Foster (*When it's over*)

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SPECIAL THANKS TO: Stu Garneys (*Episodes of Mrs. Brown's Boys on TV on Christmas Day!*), James Hickie (*The intense preparation / it all being over too quickly*), David McLaughlin (*The price of flights home*).

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THE KING'S SPEECH

COREY TAYLOR

GATHER ROUND, AS THE **STONE SOUR** AND **SLIPKNOT** FRONTMAN DELIVERS A FESTIVE ADDRESS. AND THEN LET HIM GET ON WITH TAKING OFF HIS STRIDES AND DOING BOG ALL…

"CHRISTMAS IS AN EXCUSE TO NOT WEAR PANTS!"
COREY TAYLOR

WORDS: JAMES HICKIE **PHOTO:** PAUL HARRIES

"Christmas in the Taylor household is pretty special, as I'm sure it is in your homes, too. It's the time of year when I know I'm not going to be on the road, I get to spend time with my kids, see my friends, do some cooking, and wander around with no pants on. Actually, ignore all that shit that I said before that: the most important thing about Christmas is that it gives me an excuse to not wear pants! That's something that I feel that I've earned as a long-time Christmas-doer and taxpayer.

"This is a time of year when we take stock of the things we're thankful for. I'm thankful that my kids are healthy and loved. I'm thankful that I still have my grandmother in my life. I'm thankful that I've been strong enough to embrace the changes that I've seen. I'm thankful for a career that's spanned a long time with two different bands, and seems to be getting bigger and bigger.

"I don't really know what my highlight of 2017 has been, but the reactions to Stone Sour's newest record, Hydrograd, would definitely be up there. It's been the biggest album in the band's history, and to have this kind of success 15 years down the road doesn't happen much anymore, so we've been lapping that up. Right at the end of the year we got to play two nights at Brixton again. Who gets to do that?! To be getting to that level with Stone Sour is fucking insane!

"My New Year's resolution for 2018 is to stop engaging trolls about politics on Twitter because, honestly, I would rather take a fucking saw to my own face than deal with that kind of bullshit anymore. It's so unnecessary and pathetic, and I can't take any more of that shit. It's not even just that I have a problem with their politics; it's their self-righteous indignation that comes with it. For all the harrumphing that the right does about the left being a bunch of snowflakes, they are the ones that are so butthurt about so much shit that it's not even funny. I look at them and think, 'I'm not going to sit here and debate a crying child.' If there was a button on Twitter that asked, 'Would you like to block with relish?' then that's the one I'd be hitting. They can enjoy their spoiled brat infancy. I've got kids of my own, without having to deal with kids that I don't need to take care of.

"The one message I would impart to Kerrang! readers for Christmas is this: *never* stop educating yourself. If something that you believe is right turns out to be wrong, you have to embrace that – you can't just reject it out of spite. I'm one of the most wrong people on the planet, and I also have one of the biggest fucking mouths, so it's one of the biggest lessons I've had to learn. It's going to make you a better person to be on the better side of facts than the worst side of fiction.

"Merry Christmas, and God bless the Mueller investigation,"
COREY TAYLOR

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